Only Since World War II has the term Southeast Asia been used to describe the area to the east of India and to the south of China, which includes the Indo-Chinese Peninsula, the Malay Archipelago and the Philippines, roughly forming a circle from Burma through Indonesia to Vietnam. Before the term Southeast Asia became common usage, the region was often described as *Further or Greater India,* and it was common to describe the Indonesian region or Malay Archipelago as the East Indies. The reason may be found in the fact that, prior to Western dominance, Southeast Asia was closely allied to India culturally and commercially. The history of Indian expansion covers a period of more than fifteen hundred years.

This region was broadly referred to by ancient Indians as Suvarnabhumi (the Land of Gold) or Suvarnadvipa (the Island of Gold), although scholars dispute its exact definition. Sometimes the term is interpreted to mean only Indonesia or Sumatra. Arab writers such as Al Biruni testify that Indians called the whole Southeast region Suwarndib (Suvarnadvipa). Hellenistic geographers knew the area as the Golden Ghersonese. The Chinese called it Kin-Lin; Kin means gold. During the last two thousand years, this region has come under the influence of practically all the major civilizations of the world: Indian, Chinese, Islamic, and Western. Of these, Indian culture appears to have blended best with the indigenous culture.

The name Java comes from the Sanskrit Jawadwip*,* which means a (dvip) island (yawa) shaped like a barley corn. The Vedic Indians must have charted Java, Yawadvip, thousands of years ago because Yawadvip is mentioned in India's earliest epic, the Ramayana. The Ramayana reveals some knowledge of the eastern regions beyond seas; for instance Sugriva dispatched his men to Yavadvipa, the island of Java, in search of Sita. It speaks of Burma as the land of silver mines. The Agni Purana, along with many other Puranas, calls India proper as Jambudvipa as distinguished from Dvipantara or India of the islands or overseas India. Towards the end of the fifth century, Aryabhatta, the Indian astronomer, wrote that when the sun rose in Ceylon it was midday in Yavakoti (Java) and midnight in the Roman land. In the Surya Siddhanta reference is also made to the Nagari Yavakoti with golden walls and gates.

Seldom has the world seen such a protracted and pervasive cultural diffusion. It stands a monument to the vitality and magnetism of Indian civilization.

Suvarnabhumi: Asianization of Indian Culture



India has always given a great deal more than she has received. Civilization as we know today would not exist without India.

Indianization of Asia was entirely peaceful, never resorting to physical force or coercion to subvert local cultures or identities, or to engage in economic or political exploitation of the host cultures and societies. Its worldviews were based on compassion and mutual exchange, and not on the principle of conquest and domination.

"The unique feature of India's contacts and relationship with other countries and peoples of the world is that the cultural expansion was never confused with colonial domination and commercial dynamism far less economic exploitation. That culture can advance without political motives, that trade can proceed without imperialist designs, settlements can take place without colonial excesses and that literature, religion and language can be transported without xenophobia, jingoism and race complexes are amply evidenced from the history of India's contact with her neighbors...Thus although a considerable part of central and south-eastern Asia became flourishing centers of Indian culture, they were seldom subjects to the regime of any Indian king or conquerors and hardly witnessed the horrors and havocs of any Indian military campaign. They were perfectly free, politically

and economically and their people representing an integration of Indian and indigenous elements had no links with any Indian state and looked upon India as a holy land rather than a motherland – a land of pilgrimage and not an area of jurisdiction."

(source: **Greater India - By Arun Bhattacharjee** - Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Private Limited, 1981, New Delhi p. 2 - 3 and **Indian Culture over the World - By S V Shevade** p. 91 and **The Soul of India - By Satyavrata R Patel** p. 30 and **Geopolitics and Sanskrit phobia - By Rajiv Malhotra** - sulekha.com).



Sir Charles Norton Edgcumbe Eliot (1862-1931) British diplomat and colonial administrator, in his book, **Hinduism and Buddhism**, vol. I, p.12. says:

"In Eastern Asia the influence of India has been notable in extent, strength, and duration.

Scant justice is done to India's position in the world by those European histories which recount the exploits of her invaders and leave the impression that her own people were a feeble dreamy folk, surrendered from the rest of mankind by their seas and mountain frontiers. Such a picture takes no account of the intellectual conquests of the Hindus."

Even their political conquests were not contemptible, and are remarkable for the distance, if not the extent, of the territories occupied...**But such military or commercial invasions are insignificant compared with the spread of Indian thought."** The south-eastern region of Asia both mainland and Archipelago - owed its civilization almost entirely to India. In Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Cambodia, Champa, and Java, religion, art, the alphabet, literature, as well as whatever science and political organization existed, were the direct gift of Hindus, whether Brahmin or Buddhists, and much the same may be said of Tibet, whence the wilder Mongols took as much Indian civilization as they could stomach."

(source: **Eminent Orientalists: Indian European American** - Asian Educational Services. p. 369).



French scholar, **Sylvain Levi** (1863-1935) Orientalist who wrote on Eastern religion, literature, and history. **Levi** was appointed a lecturer at the school of higher studies in Paris (1886), he taught Sanskrit at the Sorbonne (1889-94) and wrote his doctoral dissertation, **Le Théâtre indien** ("The Indian Theatre"). In **L'Inde et le monde** ("India and the World"), he discussed India's role among nations. He writes:

"From Persia to the Chinese Sea, from the icy regions of Siberia to the islands of Java and Borneo, from Oceania to Socotra, India has propagated her beliefs, her tales and her civilization. She has left indelible imprints on one-fourth of the human race in the course of a long succession of centuries. She has the right to reclaim in universal history the rank that ignorance has refused her for a long time and to hold her place amongst the great nations summarizing and symbolizing the spirit of Humanity."

(source: **Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru**. p. 200 -210).

Wilhelm Von Humboldt (1767-1835) German Indologist, Prussian minister of education, a brilliant linguist and the founder of the science of general linguistics. He wrote:

"The Relation between India and Java"; in it the author discusses the cultural influence India extended on countries further east. **Humboldt showed that the Kawi language is Javanese and contains a number of Sanskrit loan words which prove the literary and political superiority of the Hindus.** The historical background is the emigration of Brahmins, who brought the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and other works of Sanskrit literature. He showed that no Prakrit words are found in Old Javanese and he deduced from this that the Indian immigrants must have come to Java at a time when the more recent Indian languages had not yet separated from Sanskrit.

(source: **German Indologists: Biographies of Scholars in Indian Studies writing in German** - **By Valentine Stache-Rosen**. p.5 - 6).



Suharto Sukarno (1901- 1970) Indonesian nationalist leader and the first President of Indonesia. He helped the country win its independence from the **Netherlands**. He echoed the same sentiments. In a special article in The Hindu on 4 January 1946, Sukarno wrote:

"In the veins of every one of my people flows the blood of Indian ancestors and the culture that we possess is steeped through and through with Indian influences. Two thousand years ago people from your country came to Jawadvipa and Suvarnadvipa in the spirit of brotherly love. They gave the initiative to found powerful kingdoms such as those of Sri Vijaya, Mataram and Majapahit. We then learnt to worship the very Gods that you now worship still and we fashioned a culture that even today is largely identical with your own. Later, we turned to Islam: but that religion too was brought by people coming from both sides of India."

(source: **Prospects for a Bay of Bengal community - By V. Suryanarayan**). For more refer to chapter on **Glimpses XV**

B G Gokhale (?) rightly observes: "Looking at the cultures of the peoples of Asia in general and south east Asia in particular, the awareness grows upon us that what we see in Burma or Siam or Indonesia is but an extension of Indian culture – they could be legitimately called a Greater India."

(source: **Greater India - By Arun Bhattacharjee** - Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Private Limited, 1981, New Delhi p. 1 - 20).



Norodom Sihanouk, Head of the State of the Royal Government of **Cambodia** (1954-1970 and, again, since 1993) had on the occasion of the inauguration of the Jawaharlal Nehru Boulevard in Phnom Penh, on 10 May 1955, traced the cultural evolution in Southeast Asia to the pervasive Indian cultural influence:

"When we refer to thousand year old ties which unite us with India, it is not at all a hyperbole. In fact, it was about 2000 years ago that the first navigators, Indian merchants and Brahmins brought to our ancestors their gods, their techniques, their organization. Briefly India was for us what Greece was to Latin Orient. "

(source: **The Fossilized Indian Culture of Southeast Asia - By Y Yagama Reddy**). For more refer to chapter on **Glimpses XV**

Sir Marc Aurel Stein (1862-1943) a Hungarian and author of several books including **Ra`jatarangini: a chronicle of the kings of Kashmir** and **Innermost Asia : detailed report of explorations in Central Asia, Kan-su, and Eastern Iran** carried out and described under the orders of H.M. Indian Government, whose valuable researches have added greatly to our knowledge of Greater India, remarks:



"**The vast extent of Indian cultural influences, from Central Asia in the North to tropical Indonesia in the South, and from the Borderlands of Persia to China and Japan, has shown that ancient India was a radiating center of a civilization, which by its religious thought, its art and literature, was destined to leave its deep mark on the races wholly diverse and scattered over the greater part of Asia."**

(source: **The Vision of India - By Sisir Kumar Mitra** p. 178 and **Main Currents of Indian Culture - By S. Natarajan** p. 50).

Reginald Le May (?) author of **The culture of South-East Asia;: The heritage of India**, observed: "Indian art and culture seem naturally to have exercised an extraordinary art fascination over

the indigenous peoples of all these territories, no doubt, owing to the attractions offered by Buddhism and Hinduism, while Chinese art, not bearing any particular religious message, apparently made but little impression inspite of the fact that they Chinese, too sailed the southern seas in search of trade from very early time."

He wrote: **"The beginnings of Indian colonization overseas eastward go back a very long way in time and it is almost certain that the results seen today were, in the main, not achieved by military expeditions, but by peaceful trading and religious teaching – and thereby all the more permanent."**

(source: **Greater India - By Arun Bhattacharjee** - Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Private Limited, 1981, New Delhi p. 1 - 20).

For more refer to chapter on **Glimpses XII** to **Glimpses XV.**

Introduction
Countries
Vietnam, **Indonesia Java**, **Sumatra**, **Borneo**, **Bali**, **Burma**, **Sri Lanka**, **Thailand**, **Cambodia**, **Malaya**, **Philippines**, **Japan**, **Korea, Nepal**, **Tibet**, and **Siberia.** For **China** - refer to chapter **India and China**.
Conclusion
Articles

Introduction:

India is a country of temples without equal but there is a certain irony in that one of the largest and most dramatic monuments to Hinduism rests not in India but thousands of miles away from the subcontinent amid the ruins of a metropolis hidden in the jungles of Cambodia (formerly known as Kamboja). One of the largest cities of the ancient world, Angkor was built by King Suryavarnam II to honor Lord Vishnu, it is even larger than the Vatican. To know and understand India one has to travel far in time and space, to forget for a while her present condition, and to have glimpses of what she was and what she did.

(source: **Eastern Wisdom: The Philosophies and Rituals of the East - By M. Jordan** p. 52).



Henri Mouhot (1826 -1861) a French naturalist and explorer, who had gone to South-east Asia in the late 1850's and succumbed to fever there in 1861. Mesmerized by what he saw at the temple of Angkor Vat, Mouhot in lyrical descriptions said:

"At the sight of this temple, one feels one's spirit crushed, one's imagination surpassed. One looks, one admires, and, seized with respect, one is silent. For where are the words to praise a work of art that may not have its equal anywhere on the globe? ... What genius this Michalangelo of the East had, that he was capable of concaving such a work."

(source: **Le Tour du Monde**, 2-1863-299). **He said: "See Angkor and Die."**

"What strikes the observer with not less admiration than the grandeur, regularity, and beauty of these majestic buildings, is the immense size and prodigious number of the blocks of stone of which they are constructed. In this temple alone are as many as 1532 columns. **What means of transport, what a multitude of workmen, must this have required, seeing that the mountain out of which the stone was hewn is thirty miles distant!...."**

(source: **Angkor: Heart of an Asian Empire - By Bruno Dagens** p. 140-141).

"It is grander than anything left to us by Greece or Rome." "To obtain any idea of its splendor on one must imagine the most beautiful creations of architecture transported into depths of the forests in one of the more remote countries in the world."

Mahout recorded excitedly in his diary for January 1860 after gazing on the 200-ft temple of Angkor Vat.

(source: **The World's Last Mysteries** - **Readers Digest** ASIN 089577044X p. 243).

At Ongcor, there are ...ruins of such grandeur... that, at the first view, one is filled with profound admiration, and cannot but ask what has become of this powerful race, so civilized, so enlightened, the authors of these gigantic works?

(source: **In Mouhot's Footsteps**).

According to historian **A. L. Basham**, "The whole of South-East Asia received most of its culture from India. Early in the 5th B.C. century colonists from Western India settled in Lanka. The Indian 'colonies' were peaceful ones, and the Indianized chieftains who had learnt what India had to teach them."

(source: **The Wonder That Was India - By A L Basham** p. 485).



Henri Mahout could hardly believe his eyes in 1860. He wrote of

"ruins of such grandeur, remains of structures that must have been raised at such an immense cost of labor, that, at the first view, one is filled with profound admiration....One of these temples - a rival to that of Soloman, and erected by some ancient Michael Angleo - might take an honorable place besides our most beautiful buildings. It is grander than anything left to us by Greece and Rome, and presents a sad contrast to the state of barbarism in which the nation in now plunged." To Mahout, those "prodigious works" were nothing short of astounding.

(source: **Splendors of the Past: Lost Cities of the Ancient World** - National Geographic Society. p. 186).

Philip S. Rawson writes in his book **The Art of South East Asia**:

"The culture of India has been one of the world's most powerful civilizing forces. Countries of the Far East, including China, Korea, Japan, Tibet and Mongolia owe much of what is best in their own cultures to the inspiration of ideas imported from India. The West, too, has its own debts." But the members of that circle of civilizations beyond Burma scattered around the Gulf of Siam and the Java Sea, virtually owe their very existence to the creative influence of Indian ideas... **No conquest or invasion, no forced conversion imposed them.** They were adopted because people saw that they were good and that they could use them..."

"To know **Indian art** in India alone,' says **Sir John Marshall,** 'is to know but half its story. To apprehend it to the full, we must follow it to central Asia, China and Japan; we must watch it assuming new forms and breaking into new beauties as it spreads over Tibet and Burma and Siam; **we must gaze in awe at the**

unexpected grandeur of its creations in Cambodia and Java."

(source: **Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru**. p. 200 -210). For more refer to chapter on **Glimpses XII** to **Glimpses XV.**



Hindu Trinity or Trimurti: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva

"India left the indelible impress of her high culture, not only upon religion, but also upon art, and literature, in a word, all the higher things of spirit."

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M. Rene Grousset, (1885-1952) French art historian, says: "In the high plateau of eastern Iran, in the oases of Serindia, in the arid wastes of Tibet, Mongolia, and Manchuria, in the ancient civilized lands of China and Japan, in the lands of the primitive Mons and Khmers and other tribes of Indo-China, in the countries of the Malaya-Polynesians, in Indonesia and Malay, **India left the indelible impress of her high culture, not only upon religion, but also upon art, and literature, in a word, all the higher things of spirit."**

"There is an obstinate prejudice thanks to which India is constantly represented as having lived, as it were, hermetically sealed up in its age-old civilization, apart from the rest of Asia. Nothing could be more exaggerated. During the first eight centuries of our era, so far as religion and art are concerned, central Asia was a sort of Indian colony. **It is often forgotten that in the early Middle Ages there existed a "Greater India," a vast Indian empire.** A man coming from the Ganges or the Deccan to Southeast Asia felt as much at home there as in his own native land. In those days the Indian Ocean really deserved its name."

(source: **Civilizations of the East - By Rene Grousset** Vol. II, Chapter - Farther India and the Malay Archipelago p. 275 -343).



"Indian art in Java," adds **Dr. Ernest Binfield Havell,** "has a character of its own which distinguishes it from that of the continent from whence it came. There runs through both the same strain of deep serenity, but in



the divine ideal of Java we lose the austere feeling which characterizes the Hindu sculpture of Elephanta and Mamallapuram."

(source: **The Ideals of Indian Art - By Dr. Ernest Binfield Havell** p.169
Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru. p. 214).

Rabindranath Tagore has said: "To know my country one has to travel to that age, when she realized her soul and thus transcended her physical boundaries when she revealed her being in a radiant magnanimity which illumined the eastern horizon, making her recognized as their own by those in alien shores who were awakened into a surprise of life."

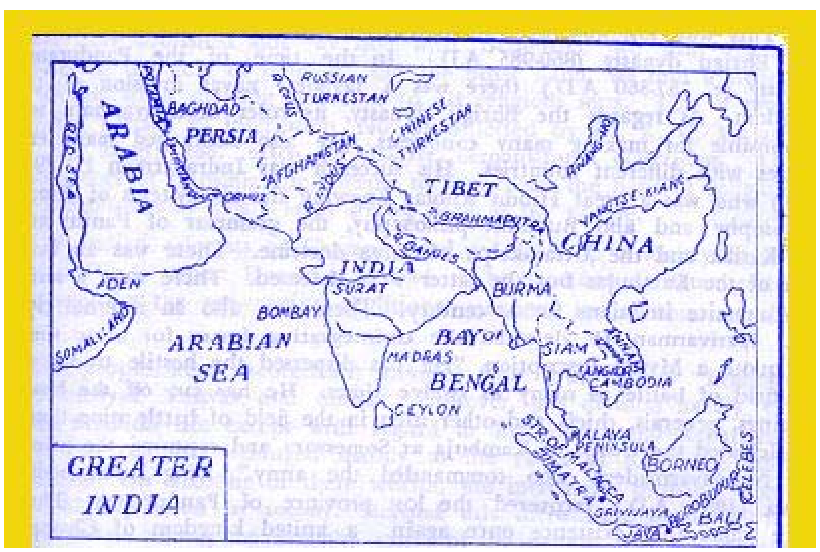
Jawaharlal Nehru has written: "**For it was India that functioned here and exhibited her vitality and genius in a variety of ways.** We see her bubbling over with energy and spreading out far and wide, carrying not only her thought but her other ideals, her art, her trade, her language and literature and her methods of government. She was not stagnant, or standing aloof, or isolated and cut off by mountain and sea. Her people crossed those high mountains and and perilous seas and built up, as (French art historian) **Rene Grousset** says, ' a Greater India politically as little organized as Greater Greece, but morally equally harmonious."

(source: **The Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru** p.207).

Jawaharlal Nehru has lamented: "How few of us know of these great achievements of our past, how few realize that if India was great in thought and philosophy, she was equally great in action. Most westerners still imagine ancient history is largely concerned with the Mediterranean countries, and medieval and modern history is dominated by the quarrelsome little continent of Europe."

According to Indian historian, **Dr. K. P. Jayaswal**, "Further India was recognized as part of India in the Bharasiva-Vakataka period. In the **Matsya Purana**, for the first time we find that recognition. Between the Himavat and the Sea Bharatvarsha stands, but it covers a larger area on account of Indians living in eight more islands (Dvipas). All these Dvipas were to the east. The Malaya Peninsula was well-known to Indians at the time, a fact evidenced by an inscription of the 4th century A.D. on a pillar in the present district of Wellesley. Burma was known as Indradvipa. Ceylon was known as Lanka-Dvipa or Tamraparni. Similarly, Cambodia, Nicobar, Sumatra, Java and Borneo were also known."

The Agni Purana, along with many other Puranas, calls India proper as Jambudvipa as distinguished from Dvipantara or India of the islands or overseas India. Ancient Indians who explored the globe in times immemorial had a three-fold motto expressed in the terms "Charaiveti" (Let us move on and on), 'Krunvanto Viswam Aryan' (Let us make all people civilized, well-behaved, dutiful, god-fearing, noble, educated etc.) and 'Wasudhaiva-Kutumbakam (the whole world is one entity, one family).



A Sanskrit-Chinese dictionary compiled in Central Asia in the seventh and eighth centuries calls the countries situated in the Southern Seas as **Jipattala** which **Sylvain Levi** interprets as the Indian archipelago and the neighboring islands. These two Indias were called by the name of **Bharatavarsha** which included the nine islands of **Dvipantara-Bharata,** each separated from the other by sea. The names of those islands were Indra-dvipa, Kaseru, Tamravarna, Gabhastiman, Nagadvipa, Saumya, Gandharva and Varuna.



Masudi, born in Baghdad, the Arab geographer, historian and philosopher, states in his work called **Muruj adh-Dhahab** or **'Meadows of Gold'** written in 942 A.D. that India in those days "extended over sea and land and bordered on the country called Zabag (Sumatra or Greater Java) ruled by the king of these islands."

Professor **Sylvain Levi** has shown from references in the **Ramayana, Mahabharata, Mahaniddesa, and Brihat-Katha** that the products of Burma and Malaya Peninsula were known to Indian merchants and sailors, and also some of its ports such as Suvarnakudya, Suvarnabhumi, Takkolam, Tamlin and Javam from at least first century A.D.

The **Periplus of the Erythrean Sea** written by a Greek sailor of Egypt in the first century A.D. mentions many ports of India then existing on its Western and Eastern coasts. **Ptolemy** in his Geography written in the second century A.D. refers to the ports of Malaya Peninsula, Java, and Sumatra and the Indian port of Palura from which voyages were directly made to Malaya Peninsula. Ptolemy's reference in the second century to Iabadiou certainly represents the Prakrit from of the Sanskrit Yavadvipa.

Indian culture flourished, reaching islands as far as Borneo and Bali. Some of it survives even today, evident from the quaint proto-Sanskritic names that still prevail in Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia and Indonesia. Borneo's capital, **Bandar Seri Begawan** is a colloquialisation of Sri Bhagwan, Bali's headquarters, **Jeyapora**, is nothing but Jaipur, localised, just as **Aranya Prathet** in Thailand is simply the jungle province or Aranya Pradesh. Fortunately, much of the structure of the gigantic temple city of Angkor Vat has survived the ravages of the Khmer Rouge, while Borobudur in Java still shines in resplendent glory.

"A Tamil inscription found in Thailand, at the site of Takua Pa, testifies to southeast Asia commerce with the Pallava region. A poem written by the 8th century Vaishnava saint, **Tirumangai**, speaks of ports where **"ships rode at anchor, bent to the point of breaking, laden as they were with wealth, with big-trunked elephants, and with mountains of gems of nine varieties."**

(source: **Indian Art - By Vidya Dehejia** p. 186).

Names like Indo-China. Further India, Insulindia, Indonesia, etc., which are applied to various parts of South East Asia and the Far East are as significant as 'Ser-Inida.' This region is geographically an extension of India and **Ptolemy rightly calls it 'Trans-Gangetic India.'**

(source: **Cultural Heritage of Ancient India - By Sachindra Kumar Maity** p.121). For a virtual tour of extensive art from Southeast Asia, visit **Museum Guimet**).



The names that were given to these settlements were old Indian names. Thus Cambodia, as it is known now, was called **Kambhoja**, which was a well-known town in ancient India, as was **Gandhara** in (present day Afghanistan). (Please refer to **Glimpses II** for information on Afghanistan)

What led to these extraordinary expeditions across perilous seas and what was the tremendous urge behind them?

According to historian, **Dr. R. C. Majumdar** (1888 - 1980), has pointed out that:

"If literature can be regarded as a fair reflex of the popular mind, trade and commerce must have been a supreme passion in India in the centuries immediately preceding and following the Christian era."

All this indicates an expanding economy and a constant search for distant markets. "The military conquest of these early Indians colonists are important as throwing light on certain aspects of the Indian character and genius which have hitherto not been

appreciated. But far more important is the rich civilization they built up in their colonies and settlements and which endured for over a thousand years. It is not known precisely when contact began between India and Southeast Asia. There is enough references in Indian books, accounts of Arab travelers, Chinese historical accounts, old inscriptions, as well as the magnificent ruins of ancient monuments, like **Angkor and Borobudur**. The old stories in Sanskrit contain many accounts of perilous sea voyages and of shipwrecks. **Both Greek and Arab accounts show that there was regular maritime intercourse between India and the Far East at least as early as the first century B.C.**

(source: **The Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru** p.200 -202).

India's Moonlight Civilization



Amaury de Riencourt (1918 -) was born in Orleans, France. He received his B.A. from the Sorbonne and his M.A. from the University of Algiers. He is author of several books including **The American empire** and **The Soul of India**, wrote:

"The brightest sun shining over Southeast Asia in the first centuries A.D. was Indian Civilization. Waves of Indian colonists, traders, soldiers, Brahmins and Buddhist beat upon one Southeast shore after another. Great military power based on superior technical knowledge, flourishing trade fostered by the remarkable increase in maritime exchanges between India and these areas, the vast cultural superiority of the Indians, everything conspired to heighten the impact of the Indian Civilization on the Southeast Asian. **Passenger ships plied regularly between the Ganges, Ceylon and Malaya in the middle of the first millennium A.D. Indian settlers from Gujarat and Kalinga colonized Java, for instance, while others set out for Burma or Cambodia.** Old Indian books – the Kathasagara, the Jatakas and others – refer to these wondorous regions that set the imagination of civilized Indians on fire, to Suvarnabhumi, the fabulous "Land of Gold." On the whole, the Indianization of Southeast Asia proceeded peacefully. Local chiefs and petty chieftains were admitted into the caste structure as Ksatriyas through a ritual known as vratyastoma, performed by an Indian Brahmin. All over Southeast Asia tremendous ruins are strewn, testifying to the immense influence of Indian Civilization. "

Indian Civilization prevailed over an immense area stretching from Afghanistan to the Pacific, including most of what is known today as Southeast Asia. Passenger ships plied regularly between the Ganges, Sri Lanka and Malaya in the middle of the first millennium A.D. Indian settlers from Gujarat and Kalinga (Orissa) colonized Java, for instance, while others set out for Burma or Cambodia. Old Indian books - the Kathasaritsagara, the Jatakas and others -refer to these wondrous regions that set the imaginations of civilized Indians on fire, to Suvarnabhumi, the fabulous "Land of Gold" as Southeast Asia was then known. And all over Southeast Asia tremendous ruins are strewn, testifying to the immense influence of Indian Civilization. Side by side, the life history of Gautama Buddha carved delicately in stone continues the bas-reliefs depicting the legendary tales of Krishna, Vishnu and Rama. **Moonlight Civilization glittered in all their magnificence, reflecting Indian Civilization at a time when it had been dealt a crippling blow at home, in India, after the Mohammedans arrived.**

Everywhere, Indian influence prevailed over the Chinese, and for evident reasons: an undoubted cultural superiority owing to much greater philosophic and religious insight. Indian Civilization respected the political autonomy of its colonies and the cultural freedom of all its units, and, on the whole, worked through peaceful penetration. The Chinese, on the other hand, proceeded by conquest, assimilation and absorption into all encompassing Chinese Civilization.

(source: **The Soul of India - By Amaury de Riencourt** ISBN 0907855032 p. 157-162).

G E Geraini commenting on **Researches on Ptolemy's Geography** rightly observes:

"From the Brahmaputra and Manipur to the Tonkin Gulf we can trace a continuous string of petty states ruled by those scions of the Kshatriya race, using the Sanskrit or the Pali language in official documents and inscriptions, building temples and other monuments of the Hindu style and employing Brahmin priest at the propitiatory ceremonies connected with the court and the state."

Prof. Reginald Le May wrote: "The beginnings of Indian colonization overseas eastward go back a very long

way in time and it is almost certain that the results seen today were, in the main, not achieved by military expeditions, but by peaceful trading and religious teaching – and thereby all the more permanent."

(source: **Greater India - By Arun Bhattacharjee** - Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Private Limited, 1981, New Delhi p. 1 - 20).



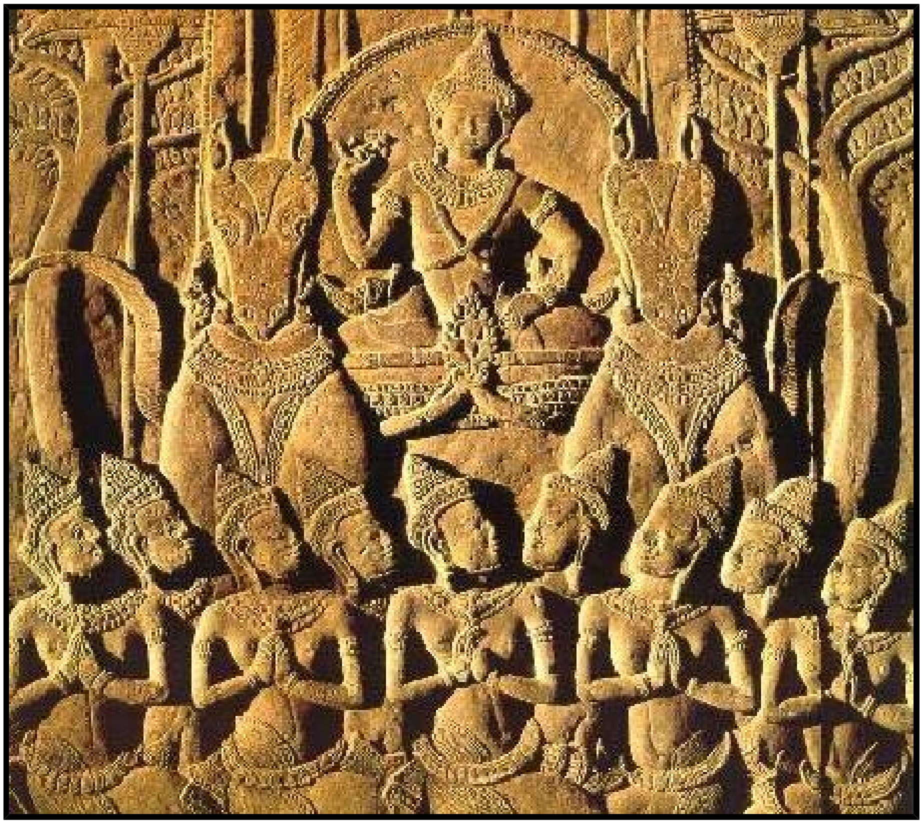
Modern historical research on Southeast Asia is in its formative stages and the attention given to its ancient past has been much less than that given to later periods. Western scholars are mainly stimulated by their colonial involvement in the area and generally concentrate attention on their own activities. An idea of the extent of knowledge about Southeast Asia may be gained from an *European scholar who wrote in 1861, that except for Burma, "the Indian countries situated beyond the Ganges hardly deserve the attention of historians."*

(source: Cited in **George Coedes, Journal of South East Asian History**, September, 1964, p. 4).

"A people with no long cultural history of their own (like the British) could not be expected to be attracted by the ancient cultural past of the people they dominated. Equally strange is the attitude of Indian historians towards the cultural past of Southeast Asia. Most of them have remained indifferent, largely because of inheriting a set system of academic training. The eastward expansion of Hindu civilization has not yet been fully traced. On the other hand, some non-Indian scholars, especially modern writers of secondary works, tend to play down India's importance in the evolution of southeast Asian civilization."

(source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** p. 80-98).

The advent of Indians in Southeast Asia has hardly a parallel in history. It cannot be equated with the arrival of Europeans in America, because the Indians did not go to Southeast Asia as strangers. In view of the ethnic affinities between the prehistoric Austro-Asiatic races of India and those of **Suvarnabhumi**, contact between the two regions may well go back to the remotest antiquity. Whatever the relationship between the two regions may be the transplantation of Indian culture into Southeast Asia began in prehistoric times with trade contacts.



His chariot drawn by prancing horse, Surya, the sun god rides the sky to a chorus of worshippers.

***

"This was the time of the great Indian expansion, when seafaring merchants fanned out across the Indian Ocean and brought to Southeast Asia a seething ferment of new ideas. From Burma to Indonesia, they established a chain of settlements along the coasts from which they traded for gold, precious stones, perfumes, and spices. The merchants brought with them their religion, Hinduism and Buddhism, their literary language, Sanskrit, their art and technology; and their science and mathematics."

(source: **Splendors of the Past: Lost Cities of the Ancient World** - National Geographic Society. p.186-190).

Indian culture, secular and religious, had found a permanent home in Southeast Asia. This was a peaceful process; unlike the Western newcomers in modern times, no forced colonization occurred.

"Seldom has the world seen such a protracted and pervasive cultural diffusion. It stands a monument to the vitality and magnetism of Indian civilization."

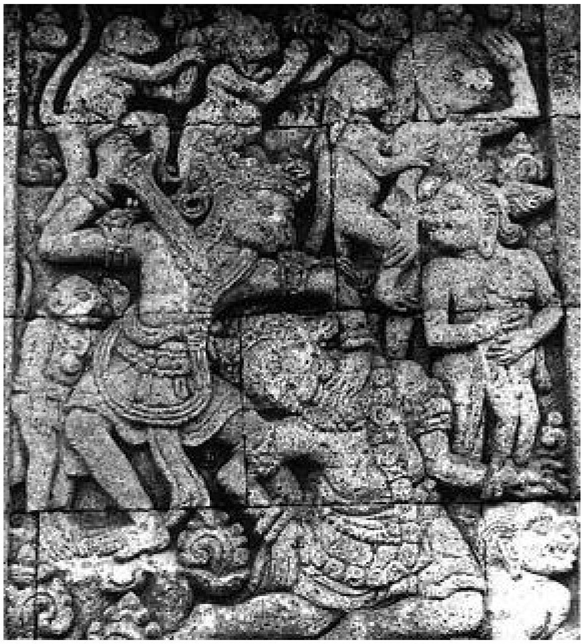
(source: **A History of World Societies - By Mackay Hill Buckler** p.318-319).

Indian culture penetrated the countries of South-East Asia entirely by peaceful means. This was the result of a series of enterprises by traders, adventurers, scholars and priests. Operating from Indian settlements that had been founded in the 1st century, these men brought the **highly refined culture of India** to peoples whose way of life was perfectly suited to Brahmanic and Buddhist teachings. Throughout this area Indianization took the form of the adoption of Sanskrit as the official and sacred language, the introduction of the Indian religions of Brahmanism and Buddhism, with their myths, philosophical systems and traditions and the establishment of a political structure very close to that of ancient India.

(source: **The Oriental World** - **By Jeannine Auboyer** Landmarks of World's Art quoted from Appendix page).



The **Ramayana** reveals some knowledge of the



eastern regions beyond the seas; for instance Sugriva dispatched his men to **Yavadvipa,** the island of Java or Sumatra, in search of Sita. It speaks of Burma as the land of silver mines. Tamil literature contains references to tall roomy ships laden with goods returning from eastern ports. **Puranic** cosmology and geographical divisions into varshas and dvipas point to Indian knowledge of this area, although the knowledge of the Puranic compilers was somewhat vague. **Lord Ganesha** is found in Thai art especially around Sukhothai in central Thailand and Khmer art of Cambodia. There are also spectacular images coming from Myanmar, Malaysia, Laos and Vietnam - with both Buddhism and Hinduism intertwined and Ganesha appearing predominantly as a protector and guardian. Nowhere in South-East Asia is Ganesha as popular as in Indonesia: with most of Java and Bali islands carrying forward continued worship of Ganesha. There are some rare Ganesha bronzes as Vinayaka in Japan and some in China.

Ganesha has been a major deity, since the seventh and eighth centuries, in Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. **It was Ganesha in his role as remover of obstacles that was primarily accepted in mainland Southest Asia.** Even today in Buddhist Thailand, Ganesha is regarded as god of success. It is from *Vinayaka* that the old Myanmar name for Ganesha, Mahapinary purha, was derived. Other names with a similar meaning occur frequently in Cambodian inscriptions, such as *Vighnesha* and *Vignesvara*, both of which mean "Lord of removing obstacles". Ganesha was extremely popular in the art of Indonesian islands, especially of Sumatra and Java and compare favorably with the eighth-century Ellora caves, in images, style and iconography. At **Candi Sukuh** in central Java, a remarkable fifteenth century relief shows three figures, with a dancing Ganesha in the centre. **There are paintings and stone sculptures of the deity found in China, apart from the textual references to Ganesha in the Chinese Buddhist canon. In Japan, there is the Shingon ritual practice that centres on Ganesha, with texts tracing back to China.** Nearer India, the assimilation of the deity with the Buddhist images is almost complete in Tibet and Nepal. In the Tibetan Buddhism, the practice associated with Ganesha, as Buddhist Tantric deity, survives up to this day. In Jainism Ganesha occasionally found a place alongside Mahabir. The Tibetan Ganesha appears, besides bronzes, in the resplendent Thangka paintings alongside the Buddha. In a single Kathmandu valley of Nepal, there are four principal manifestations of "Binayak" in a protective role: Ashok, Surya, Chandra and Bighna. In that valley, Ganapati guards the Buddhist viharas where bhajans are sung in his praise.

Ganesha is a vibrant presence whose benediction is sought by traders, travelers, artists and statesmen. As lord of business and diplomacy, he sits comfortably on a high pedestal outside Bangkok's World Trade Centre, where people offer flowers, incense and a reverential sawasdee. A gilt Ganesha presides over the bustling charivari of lucrative tourism in the lobby of the Rama Hotel. Another commands the Isetan department store. **Even Muslim Indonesia reveres him and European scholars call him the 'Indonesian god of wisdom'.** Bandung boasts a Jalan Ganesa, and his image adorns 20,000 rupiah notes.



Ganesha supported by figures of gana. Ganesha literally means "Lord of the Gana".

(source: **Ganesha: Dominating Oriental Psyche - By Utpal K. Banerjee** Tour India May 2001 and **straitstimes.com**).

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The Niddesa enumerates a series of Sanskrit or Sanskritized toponyms whose identification with localities in Southeast Asia has been proposed by French scholar, Sylvain Levi. References are found in the Buddhist Jataka and the third Buddhist Sangiti council held at Pataliputra in 247 B.C. during the reign of Asoka. Accounts of sea voyages, some of which ended in disaster, are also recounted in other ancient texts, such as the Kathakosa, and the Jain Jnatadharmakatha. The Kathakosa tells the story of Nagadutta who went to Suvarnabhumi with five hundred ships to conduct a profitable trade. There also numerous references in the **Arthasashtra** to those lands and places in eastern and Southeast Asia, which were worthy of note from the economic, commercial, or political viewpoint. For instance, it refers to a kind of sandalwood, called Tailaparnika, which was produced in Suvarnabhumi.

(source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** p. 80-98).

India's contact by sea with China would also imply Indian contact with Southeast Asia. All the Indian colonies were situated between two great countries and two great civilizations - India and China. Some of them, on the Asiatic mainland, others were on the direct trade route between India and China. Thus they were influenced by both, religion and art came from India, and philosophy of life came from China.

Sir John Malcolm wrote :

"Indian vessels "are so admirably adapted to the purpose for which they are required that, not withstanding their superior science, Europeans were unable, during an intercourse with India for two centuries, to suggest or at least to bring into successful practice one improvement. "

It was also known that in the third century a transport of horses, which would require large ships, reached Malaya and Southeast Asia.

In 1949, two scholars, Gordon Ekholm and Chaman Lal, systematically compared the Mayan, Aztec, Incan and North American Indian civilizations with the Hindu-oriented countries. According to them, the emigrant cultures of India took with them India's system of time measurement, local

gods, and customs. (For more details, please refer to the chapter **India on Pacific Waves**) **Gene Matlock**, author of **India Once Ruled the Americas!** states: The people of India have long known that their ancestors once sailed to and settled in the Americas. They called America 'Patala,' The Underworld,' not because they believed it to be underground, but because the other side of the globe appeared to be straight down."



Even in Cambodia and in the mighty remains of Angkor the only artistic influence that can be detected is from India. But Indian art was flexible and adaptable and in each country it flowered afresh in many new ways, always retaining that basic impress which it derived from India.

Sir John Marshall, discoverer of the Indus Valley, has referred to "**the amazingly vital and flexible character of Indian art.**" Indian art derives its basic character from certain ideals associated with the religion and philosophic outlook of India. **Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy**, late curator at the Boston Museum, has said: " A more conscious of sophisticated art could scarcely be imagined. Despite its invariably religious subject matter, it is an art of "great courts charming the mind by their noble matter, this is an art of "great courts charming the mind by their noble routine."

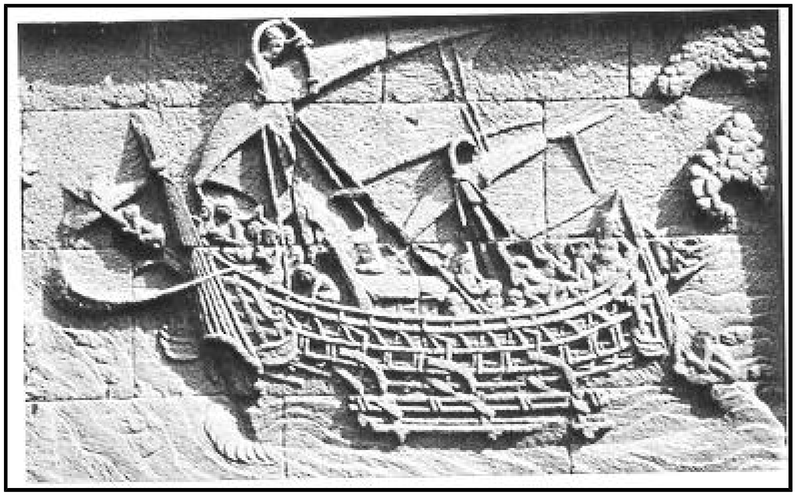
(source: **India Discovered - By John Keay** p. 162).

That Indian traders and settlers repeatedly undertook journeys to Southeast Asia, despite the hazards and perils involved, speaks well for their physical prowess, courage, and determination, even if allowance for the pull of profit is made. Not only were the Indian traders vehicles of culture in this part of the world, but everywhere trade has been a major factor in dissemination of culture. **Arthur Waley**, author of the book, **The Way and its Power**, has declared that merchants were undoubtedly the main carriers of information about the outside world, and disputes the assertion which is derived from false analogy between the East and West that merchants are not likely to have been interested in philosophy. Indian or Chinese merchants, in contrast to European traders, were "reputedly capable of discussing metaphysical questions" and there is ample testimony in Buddhist legend of such merchants.

"Each blade of grass here breathes of Indian culture"- said **Jawaharlal Nehru**, during his visit to Cambodia in1954 to commemorate the 2500th birth anniversary of Buddha.

India, as **Jawaharlal Nehru** observed way back in 1954, continues to breathe in these parts. Lao religion is guided by both Hindu and Buddhist influences; the prevalent language here has Sanskrit and Pali roots; Laos has evolved Ramayana Ballet like an institution; ancient shivalingams were discovered in the south of Laos in 1999; Laotians greet their elders with a nop similar to the Indian namaste; they take their shoes off outside their homes; temples in the ancient Laotian Capital of Luang Prabang bear distinct Indian influences. All this and much more remain literally miles away from the collective Indian consciousness. Similarly, the ancient complex of Angkor Wat in Cambodia, rediscovered in the 1940s, is an incredible testimony to the reach of Hindu religion and culture way back in the 12th century. The massive temple complex dedicated to Vishnu and bearing frescoes from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata and detailed scenes of **Samudramanthan** tells the story of a time when despite transport handicaps Indians traveled to distant shores and placed their indelible signature on a civilization that breathes to this day. That these great civilizations of the Mekong River (Mekong is said to be a derivative for Ma Ganga) have kept alive a great Indian heritage is a little-acknowledged fact in India, except of course their lifeless documentation in Government records and academic research.

(source: **South East Asia, truly India - By D. Ganguly - dailypioneer.com**).



Ancient Indian ocean-going ship arriving at Java, from a frieze of the Borobodur stupa.

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The discovery of monsoon made sea journeys between India and the Western world safe and punctual, and the Roman demand for the luxury goods of the East had reached fantastic proportions - far beyond what India alone could supply. Consequently, the Indians went in increasing numbers to Southeast Asia looking for those things that could be sold to the Romans at such good prices that Pliny the Elder was to bewail this loss of blood inflicted to the Roman economy.

(source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** p. 80-98).

In the beginning of the Christian era, India lost Siberia as her most important source of gold, because political upheavals and large-scale movements of the people of Central Asia in the last two centuries B.C. cut off the trade route.

In Indonesia, Hinduism arrived first, but it was made no conscious attempt to convert local peoples to their faith or culture. They certainly did not impose it by force. Proselytism was precluded by the very nature of the Hindu faith, which explains the general unconcern of Indians with the Indianization of Southeast Asia. However, later Buddhist missionaries worked for the spread of their faith. In some countries, like Indonesia, Hinduism was intermingled with Buddhism, that Shiva and the Buddha were described as brothers! Indeed, in Balinese temples where the religion is Balinese Hinduism, Saiva and Buddhist priest sit side by side, although dressed differently, as they bless the laity.



Even the remarkable Hellenization of the Mediterranean world does not compare with the Indianization of Southeast Asia.

India was far from Southeast Asia. There were far fewer Indians in Southeast Asia than Greeks in the Hellenistic world, and those Indians had to contend with an equally powerful Chinese civilization in an area mainly frequented by Chinese. On the other hand, Greek civilization did not confront such a contrast of cultural and ethnic types.

There is nothing in the Hellenistic world to compare with the Angkor Wat or Borubudur. In addition, India contributed not only philosophy and thought, but also a religion that still survives in most areas of Southeast Asia. Greek religion is a thing of the past.

(source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** p. 80-98).



The Hindu kingdoms that rose in South-East Asia had no political connection with the mother country. Their inscriptions are in Sanskrit hardly differing from those of any Indian States. The Hindu epics and puranas still contribute to the themes for the theatre, dances, and shadow plays and the marionette shows of Malaya and Java. The influence of the Dharmasastras and the Arthasastra on the polity of these lands is clearly traceable. Their languages have been enriched by contact with Sanskrit. The scripts of all their languages are adaptations of Indian writing. The kings performed vedic sacrifices; they used the Saka era and the lunar-solar calendar. Tangible results of ancient Indian contact may be seen in their monuments and temples. Till very recently at Phnom Penh in Cambodia and at Bangkok in Siam brahmins of a very mixed descent followed Buddhism and wore the sikha and upavita, and worshipped an assortment of Hindu and Buddhist images.

Kambuja (Cambodia) according to tradition was established by Kambu Svayambhuva after whom the country was named Kambuja. Some of its famous rulers bore names ending in Varman as in South Indian; examples are Jayavarman, Yasovarman, and Suryavarman. The law books of Siam (Thailand) were framed on the basis of the Hindu dharmasastras and the temples of its capital, Bangkok, were adorned with sculptures depicting scenes from the Ramayana.

The peaceful and sympathetic methods of Hindu colonists were in striking contrast to the Chinese policy of conquest and annexation and to the severity and exploitation inherent in modern western colonization.

(source: **Advanced History of India - By Nilakanta Sastri and G. Srinivasachari** p.231-233).

Reginald S. Le May (1885 -) author of **The culture of South-East Asia; the heritage of India** has observed:

"India, indeed, began to exercise a profound cultural influence on her neighbors to the eastward - Burma, Siam, Malaya, Cambodia, Java and Sri Lanka all falling beneath her sway. And this, as far as one can may judge, almost entirely as a result of trading and peaceful penetration by missionaries, merchants and others, and not by force of arms." "The beginnings of Indian colonization overseas eastward go back a very long way in time and it is almost certain that the results seen today were, in the main, **not achieved by military expedition, but by peaceful trading and religious teaching - and thereby all the more permanent."**

Contrasting the Indian method with the Chinese he remarked:

"**Indian religious art and culture seem naturally to have exercised an extraordinary fascination over the indigenous peoples of all these territories**, no doubt, owing to the attractions offered by Hinduism and Buddhism, while Chinese art, not bearing any particular religious message, apparently made little impression, in spite of the fact that the Chinese, too, sailed to southern seas..."

(source: **India and The World - By Buddha Prakash** p. 7-8 Institute of Indic Studies Kurukshetra University 1964).

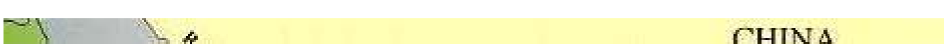
For more refer to chapter on **Glimpses XII** to **Glimpses XV.**

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Countries:

Champa/Angadvipa on the coast of Annam - Vietnam

Champa is the remotest colony in the East and was less known than Kamboja and Java. According to **Sir Charles Eliot**, the Hindu dynasty of Champa was founded between 150 and 200 A.D. The conquerors were known as the **Chams** and hence the country came to be known as Champa. Vietnam, figures prominently as a stepping stone in the story of India's cultural expansion to the Americas.



According to historian **Dr.**



K. P. Jayaswal, "The State of Champa, according the Chinese authorities was founded in 137 A. D.

Champa seems to have been mentioned under the name **Angadvipa** by the **Vayu Purana**.

Again, Champa was probably the earliest colony, it being a key to the Chinese trade and the point from the islands of Java and Borneo are easily accessible." It maintained close relations with Funan, a fact which must have been largely responsible for the penetration of Indian influence there.

A Hindu dynasty was founded by Sri Mara in the second century A.D. A successor to Sri Mara was the famous king called Bhadravarma. He ruled over the Northern and Central portions of the kingdom comprising the provinces of Amravati and Vijaya and possibly also the Southern province of Panduranga. His greatest contribution was to Hindu culture was the building of the temple of Bhadresvarasvamin (Shiva) at Myson which became the national shrine of the Chams.

It is said that Bhadravarman abdicated his throne to spend his last days on the banks of the river Ganges. This was followed by two dynasties - the **Panduranga** dynasty (757-860) and later by the **Bhrigu** dynasty (860-985).

Champa passed through various dynasties and war with China continued in the 3rd and 4th century. This was a period of political unrest in China, and which gave Champa the opportunity to expand into Chinese territory. Shiva and Vishnu were worshipped by various names. **Goddess Laxmi was known as Padma or Sri.**

As regards to literature, Sanskrit was the language of the learned. It was also the official language of the country. Many kings of Champa were Sanskrit scholars. Brahmi script was used in inscriptions.

The books were in use were the Vedas, Sastras, the Epics, Buddhist philosophy, Saivism, Vaisnavism, Panini's grammar along with its commentary, Dharmasastras of Manu and Narada,

the Puranas and classical Sanskrit literature including prose and Kavya literature.

Vietnam's Siva Lingams

VIietnam, June 23, 2001: A Siva Lingam monument, a relic from the lost Champa Kingdom, stands proudly at the My Son site in Vietnam. **Statues depicting Lingam and Yoni can be found in Hindu-influenced cultures across the entire Asian region.** But the Cham religion in Vietnam has taken these images and fashioned them into a distinctive and different form.



Lingam and Yoni in the Cham religion differ from their Indian progenitors and their presence in Vietnam is evidence of the profound influence of Indian culture and religion in the country.

It is also proof of the strong sense of identity of the Cham people, who borrowed from Hinduism and created statues and temples with a style all of their own.

Cham Linga sculptures generally have a flat top, with only a few featuring spherical shapes. they are generally found in three different styles: square; another in two parts, one cylindrical and one square; and another has a cylindrical upper, the middle is octagonal and the bottom is square. Linga and Yoni are usually constructed as one structure. Traditionally only one Linga is attached to the Yoni, but in some Cham sculptures many Linga can be found on a single Yoni platform. The differences between Cham sculptures and those found else where in the Hindu world demonstrate subtle changes from their origins.

(source: **Giving new image and likeness to old beliefs - by Nguyen Van Ngoc** http://vietnamnews.vnagency.com.vn/2001-06/23/Stories/29.htm).

For more information on Vietnam refer to chapter on **Glimpses XIV**

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Indonesia

Java or Yavadvipa



Sir Stamford Raffles (1781-1826) the British Governor of Java, in his book, **History of Java**, II, p. 87, wrote:

“In the year 525 Saka era – 603 A.D., it being foretold to a king of Gujarat that his country would decay and go to ruin, he resolved to send his son to Java. He embarked with about 5000 followers in 6 large and about 100 small vessels, and after a voyage of four months reached an island they supposed to be Java; but finding themselves mistaken, re-embarked, and finally settled at Matarem, in the center of the island they were seeking….The prince then found that men alone were wanting to make a great and flourishing state. He accordingly applied to Gujarat for assistance, when his father, delighted at his success, sent him reinforcement of 2000 people…From this period Java was known and celebrated as a kingdom; an extensive commerce was carried on with Gujarat and other countries, and the bay of Matarem was filled with adventurers from all parts.”

(source: **Periplus of the Erythrean Sea - W.H. Schoff** p. 245).

There is an Indian tradition at that "those who go to Java do not come back." There are many views regarding the beginnings of Hindu colonization of Java. One view connects the original colonies under their leader called Ajisaka with the heroes of the Mahabharata and Astina or Hastinapura. Another view traces the colonization to Gujarat. The third view traces it to Kalinga (Orissa) from where "twenty thousand families were sent to Java by the prince of Kalinga." The Javanese era started by Ajisaka starts from 78 A.D. which is also the beginning of the Saka era of India. According to historian, **R. C. Majumdar,** "The Indian settlement in Java dates from the 2nd century A.D. if not earlier, and the Hindu culture flourished there till the end of 15th century.

Fa-hien, the Chinese traveler, visited Java on his way to China in about 418 A.D. **He tells that there was no Buddhism only Hinduism in Java. The name Java is taken from the Sanskrit word Yava.** The kings of Java had their names which ended with **Varman**. There were several kingdoms in Java. Four Sanskrit inscriptions have been found me in Western Java mention a king named **Purna-varmarn**. One of them calls his grandfather Rajarishi and another ancestor his father **Rajadhiraja**. The latter is said to have dug the Chandrabhaga which reached the sea after passing by the capital city. Purna-varman himself dug a similar canal called the Gomati river. Purna-varman ruled in the sixth century A.D. and his capital was known as Taruma.

Both Hinduism and Buddhism flourished here. We find worship of Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma in the temples. Grants of land were made to the priests. Images of Mahadevi and Durga have been also found. Literature was mainly theological. We have the Arjuna-vivaha, poetic rendering of the Bharat-yuddha from the Mahabharata, Kavi Ramayana, Vritta Sanchaya.

The temple of Java are a standing monuments of the influence exercised by Indian thought and art in moulding the development of the entire art of Java. The monumental history begins in Central Java, with the Chandi (temple) Punta Deva, Bhima, Sri Khanda, Pawon and Arjuna. Shiva temple of Chandi Bayon near Borobudur. Superb images of Vishnu, Shiva, Brahma, Ganesh, and Agastya Siva-guru have been found from there. The best temples at Prambanam are known as Chandi Loro Jauggrang. These are considered the greatest Hindu monuments of Java.

The worship of **Rishi Agastya**, the sage responsible for the diffusion of Hindu culture in Java, the frequent occurrence of Ganesha images, the organization of rural economy and village administration, the shadow and puppet plays and Vedic hymns and rituals of Bali, all point to the extension of Indian religious and cultural influences of these islands. **A statue of Agastya is found at Candi Banon** - early 9th century Batavia)

(source: **The Indians And The Amerindians - By Dr. B. Chakravarti**. Self-Employment Bureau Publication Calcutta p. 32)

Prambanan - slender and ethereal Hindu temples



Built in the 10th century, this is the largest **Shiva** compound in Indonesia. Rising above the center of the last of these concentric squares are three temples decorated in relief illustrating the epic of the Ramayana, dedicated to the three great Hindu divinities (Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu) and three temples dedicated to the animals who serve them. The **Prambanan temple**, which was dedicated to Lord Shiva, was started in 856 AD and completed in 900 AD by King Daksa. Earlier Shiva temples were built in 675 AD on the Dieng mountain range, southwest of Medang Kamolan, the capital of the Mataram Kingdom.

Dr. Ananda Coomarswamy, late curator at the Boston Museum, was of the opinion that

"the Prambanam reliefs are, if anything, superior to those of Borobudur and certainly more



dramatically conceived. "

Of the sculptures in Prambanum, **Sir Stamford Raffles** (1781-1826) the British Governor of Java and author of **History of Java** says:

"In the whole course of my life I have never met with such **stupendous and finished specimens of human labor, and of the science and taste of ages** long since forgot, crowded together in small a compass as in this little spot."

(source: **History of Java**. volume II p. 15)

The "Wayang kulit" of Java is performed with leather puppets held by the puppeteer, who narates the story of one of the famous episodes of the Hindu epics, the Mahabharata or the Ramayana. The Indonesian flag, being of two colors, bears the Sanskrit name Dwivarna. The famous dance dramas of Java and Bali are derived from Hindu stories and often feature fragments from the **Ramayana and Mahabharata** Hindu epics.

'Not very far from Borobudur, writes **Dr. Raghuvira** 'is the complex Prambanam, the like of which is known neither to India nor to any other neighboring or distant land...Here are the life-cycles of Lord Krsna known as Krsnayana parallel to the Ramayana, the powerful dragon being torn asunder by the superb arms of the Divine Krsna. In another place is the scene of Kumbhakarna being awakened by conches and screeches of elephants, a portrayal of the highest order....



The five cardinal points of the Indonesian constitution are also designated by the Sanskrit word **Panchashila**. Its airline is called **Garuda**, **the Sanskrit name for the eagle carrier of Lord Vishnu.** The old Javanese alphabet derives from the Pallava script of South India. One such inscription was found in the south-eastern region of Borneo on four octagonal stone pillars, written in Sanskrit in a 4th century Indian script. Indonesians still follow the Vedic year and call it **Sakh-Samvat**.

(source: **Proof of Vedic Culture's Global Existence - By Stephen Knapp** p. 230).

Rabindranath Tagore has said about the culture of Indonesia: **' I see India all around me.'** And in Indonesia, such words as 'sea' and 'ship' are recognizable for their Tamil roots.'

Lara Jonggrang Temple - commonly called the Prambanan Temple

"The great temple of Shiva at Lara Jonggrang is chiefly famous for its relief's which narrate before our eyes the whole story of the Ramayana. We need only mention a few particularly fine scenes from the principal series: that of Dasaratha saluting Visvamitra, with the noble, majestic figures of the old King; Rama drawing the bow of Shiva and thus winning the hand of the fair Sita - the first of the scenes in which we see the hero in the elegant attitude of an archer, together with a Sita whose slender, undulating form reminds us of the daughters of Mara at Borobudur.."

(source: **Civilizations of the East - By Rene Grousset** Vol. II, Chapter - Farther India and the Malay Archipelago p. 294).



Lara Jonggrang Temple - commonly called the Prambanan Temple

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Gold foil inscribed in old Javanese script, **'Om Rudrayana puh swaha',** meaning 'This is the way of the god Rudra who destroys heaven.'



Gedong Songo

The monuments of Gedong Songo display greater unity and with the ex-ception of the later Group I, must have been built in one period between 750 and 775 AD. Although the architectural compositions are similar to Dieng, the site plans of the groups are quite varied, and later exerted an influence on monuments of a much larger scale. Group III includes three main shrines oriented toward the west, **dedicated to the three gods of the Trimurti: in the centre Siva, on the north Vishnu, on the south Brahma**. In front of the Siva sanctuary a small building sheltered the vehicle of Siva, the bull Nandin. This latter edifice (right) is particularly interesting because it shows that a manual was used in its design. Because the proportions of this edifice were designed for a larger structure, the entrance would have been only one metre high. To avoid this inconvenience, the architect lowered the base of the opening so that it cut through the mouldings of the temple foot. This detail shows how, despite variations and alterations, the architects wished to conform to Indian texts which governed architecture.

Candi (temple) Badut - Dating from the late eighth century, Badut was constucted at the time when the Sailendra kings ruled in central Java. The Dinoyo inscription, which is written in **Sanskrit, records the**

construction of a temple dedicated to Agastya by the son of a king named Devasingha ruling a kingdom called Kanjuru-han.



Siva linga in Candi Badut, the oldest known temple in east Java.



Candi (temple) Arjuna

This temple forms part of the largest remaining architectural complex on the Dieng Plateau. The interior houses a Siva lingga and yoni. The shrine is equipped with a makara-headed spout which was meant to channel the fluids used to lustrate the linga from inside the shrine to the outside. In this way, commoners who were not allowed into the shrine's interior could still benefit from the ceremonies held inside by collecting the water which flowed from this conduit, believed to be full of supernatural fertility and other qualities. This feature is common in Indian temples but in Indonesia only Candi Arjuna possesses such a *sutasoma*. This suggests that Candi Arjuna may be the oldest surviving building in Java, and perhaps even in all of Southeast Asia. The structure is relatively complete except for the pinnacle which has vanished.

(source: **Indonesian Heritage**).

Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeran (1760-1842) wrote: "**The colonization of the eastern coast of Java by Brahmins is "a fact well established by Sir Stamford Raffles**."

(source: **Historical Researches - By Arnold Hermann Ludwig Heeran** Vol II p. 303 and **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 183).

From the Indian soil where he originated, prince Rama "traveled" across the oceans for 20 centuries, and made his way into the heart and mind of Indonesians. His life story, as recorded in Ramayana by Indian poet Valmiki around the seventh century BC, has undergone many transformations over the years. But one thing that persists throughout the recurrent transformation in Java and Bali is the perception of human values inherent in Ramayana's characters and, most importantly, its philosophical concept that governs human relationships that are but universal ideals. The transformation -- as a result of the cross-cultural exchange between India and Indonesia through trade dating back as early as the beginning of the first millennium AD -- and the many faces of Rama that were reconstructed by ancient Indonesian poets and scholars,

(source: **Unveiling Rama in Indonesia - By Ivy Susanti** - jakaratapost.com).

For more information on Java refer to chapter on **Glimpses XII**.

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Sumatra - Suvarnadvipa/Samudradvipa



The geographical position of Sumatra marks it out as pre-eminently the **earliest Hindu settlement** in Indonesia. At the earliest Hindu kingdom in Sumatara was **Sri-Vijaya (Palembang)**. It was founded in or before the fourth century A.D. It rose to great eminence towards the close of the seventh century A.D. By that time, it had conquered another Hindu kingdom of Malaya and established its supremacy over the island of Banka. **ITsing**, the Chinese traveler, tells us that trading ships sailed between India and Sumatra. The city of Sri Vijaya was the chief center of trade with China. There was regular navigation between it and Kwan-Tung.

The empire was also a sea Power based on trade. Hence you find that it had ports wherever it could get the smallest footing. Indeed a remarkable feature of the settlements of the Sumatrian State was their strategic value - that is to say, they were carefully located at places where they could command the surrounding seas. Often they were in pairs to help each other in maintaining this command. Thus, Singapore, which is a great city now, was originally a settlement of the Sumatran colonists. The name, as you will notice, is a typical Indian name: **Singhpur**. The Sumatran people had another settlement just opposite the Straits, facing Singhpur. Sometimes they would stretch an iron chain right across the Strait and so stop all ships from passing till they paid heavy tolls.

At the beginning of the eleventh century the Chinese Emperor sent a gift of a number of bronze bells to the Sumatran King. In return the latter sent pearls and ivory and Sanskrit books. There was also a letter inscribed on a golden plate in "Indian characters." it is said.

(source: **Glimpses of World History - By Jawaharlal Nehru** p. 135).

Heine-Geldern has described the influence of South India on Sumatra.

He has said that: **"We can safely assert that Sumatra has not only once been colonized by Hindus, but that, owing to more than a thousand years of close connection, it became an integral part of the Greater Indian cultural area."**

Borneo or Varunadvipa

The earliest evidence of Hindu colonies of Borneo is furnished by inscriptions which have been referred on paleographic grounds to about 400 A.D. These inscriptions refer to king Mula-varman, son of Asva-varman and grandson of king Kundunga. Mula-varman performed a sacrifice known as Vahusu-varmakam and gave 20,000 cows to the Brahmins. A number of Hindu and Buddhist images have been found in Kombeng.



This explains why this period in history is called the Period of Hindu Kingdoms. It lasted from ancient times to the 16th Century AD. Because the culture and civilization, which emanated from the Hindu and Buddhist religions, were syncretized with the local cultural elements, the period was also referred to as the Hindu-Indonesian period. Indian culture and customs were introduced, such as the system of government in a monarchy, the ancestry system, the organization of military troops, literature, music and dances, architecture, religious practices and rituals, and even the division of laborers into castes or varnas. The Hindu literary works known as Vedas and the "Mahabharata" and "Ramayana" epics were also introduced through the wayang, or shadow-play performance, which is still very popular in many parts of present day Indonesia. The first indian migrants came primarily from Gujarat in Southeast India during the first Christian era.

The Caka period in Indonesia witnessed the introduction of the Sanskrit language and the Pallawa script by the Indian Prince Aji Caka (78 AD). The Devanagari script of the sanskrit language was also used, as shown in ancient stone and copper inscriptions (paracasthies) which have been unearthed. The language and script were adopted and called the Kawi language and included words and phrases derived from Javanese.Early trade relations were established between South India and Indonesia. Sumatra was then named Swarna Dwipa of "the island of gold, " Java was called Java Dwipa or "the Rice island," and a Hindu kingdom of Crivijaya in Sumatra and Nalanda in South India were not comfirmed to religious and cultural exchanges. They later developed diplomatic relations, and even covered a wide range of trade.

The influx of Indian settlers continued during the period from the first to the seventh century AD. Peacefully and gradually the Hindu religion spread throughout the archipelago. It was adopted by all layers of the people of Java, but limited to the upper classes on the other islands. (source: http://www.indonesia-ottawa.org/indonesia/general/history.html#hindu)

The sultan of Brunei (in Borneo) bore the title of Seri Bhagwan meaning Shree Bhagwan (Lord Almighty). Sarawak, a part of Borneo happened to lose its suzerainty to the British. Yet the white English ruler of Sarawak too was known as the Rajah.

Bali or Balidvipa

Bali has been justly called the island of thousands of temples. Despite the loss of about 2500 temples due to earthquake, it still contains more than 4500 large and important temples. The most important is Pura Besakih, at the foot of the mountain Gunung Agung, and associated with the Hindu Trinity. It is said to have been founded by Warmadeva Keshari (Wira Dalem Kesari). The island of Bali possesses the unique distinction of being the only Hindu colony in the Far East which still retains its old culture and civilization to a considerable extent. Islam has failed to penetrate into this island. **The people are still proud of their Hindu connection. Vishnu, Shiva, Indra, Ganesh, Nandi, Krishna and the heroes of the Mahabharata are still known.** *The Vedas, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana are found there although not in Sanskrit but in Kawi.* The people call their deities as Devas. We have the temples of Durga and the images of Durga and Kaliki. The bodies of the dead are still burnt.



Sir Stamford Raffles while describing the small island of Bali, situated towards the east of Java says: "Here, together with the Brahminical religion, is still preserved the ancient form of Hindu municipal polity."

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 184).

For more information on Bali refer to chapter on **Glimpses XIII**.

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Sailing down the seas of history

Charting the coastline from Mumbai to the very end of Gujarat, where India ends and Pakistan begins, the 1,000 nautical mile voyage that will end on February 11 is in preparation for another, more ambitious voyage. The sailors, calling themselves the Maritime Exploration and Research Group, is getting ready to follow the path of ancient Indian mariners from south India all the way to Indonesia.

Inspired by the Chola kings of the 11th century, who discovered the present-day Indonesian islands of Sumatra and Bali, the group is preparing to replicate the feat using traditional instruments and a boat resembling the vessels of yore.

Called the Simulation of Chola Navigation Techniques, the forthcoming expedition will attempt to cover the distance between Nagapatnam in southern India and the Indonesian islands."The expedition will aim to show that our ancient seafarers were in no way inferior to their Western counterparts," said B. Arunachalam, a researcher who is the moving spirit behind the expedition. The expedition has cost the team members nearly Rs.100,000 but they have received substantial assistance from the Indian Navy.

(source: **Sailing down the seas of history -** newindpress.com). For more refer to **Hindu**

Indonesia.com).

Hindu Presence in Indonesia

Indian culture, often in its pristine form, makes an appearance whichever way one turns in this sprawling archipelago. **The national language, Bahasa Indonesia, is replete with Sanskrit words**. So are names of people: Nirmala, Apsara, Rati, Dewi and so on. The given name of bdurrahman Wahid's wife is Sinta, which is Indonesian for Sita. And the Vice-President is, of course, named **Megawati Sukarnoputri,** the daughter of Indonesia's first President, Sukarno.

At a traffic roundabout on one of the busiest arteries of the city stands a monumental sculpture facing the central bank on one side and the national monument on the other. **It depicts Krishna and Arjuna in a chariot drawn by several horses. The sheer size and magnificence of this famous scene from the Mahabharata has no parallel in India.**

The mottos inscribed on government buildings are equally revealing. When you drive past the defence ministry -- called the **Yuddha Graha** -- you come across the following inscription engraved in marble on the archway: **Chatur Dharma, Eka Karma**. Further down the road is the ministry of sports known as the Krida Bhakti. The government has also named its national airlines after **Garunda Airways.**



An image of Lord Ganesha is printed on high denominational currency notes. Ganesha statues are seen everywhere, including a magnificent one at the entrance of the presidential palace. **Statues of dwarpalakas** are to be found in front of both public and private buildings. The exhibits in the national museum are almost entirely Hindu or Buddhist: Shiva and Parvati, Vishnu, Durga, Vigneshwara, Brahma Deva...

(source: **Hindu presence in Indonesia** - media watch.org).

The royalty and aristocracy of South East Asian ruling kingdom too favored the flamboyant gold shot woven cottons and silks of India, the gossammar thin muslin, the intricate weaves and motifs which embellished textiles. **The genesis of the lasting impact on South East Asia of Indian culture perhaps lies in the "Greater India" Hindu kingdoms of Khamboja, Champa, Annam Srivijaya and Madajahit, which flourished in (modern day) Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines and lasted from Second Century A.D. to the 15th Century.**



Ceremonial cloth and sacred heirloom, Coromandel coast, India,

The textiles of Indonesia have, across time, also incorporated and integrated Hindu's symbols such as the Garuda, the naga, the lotus, the elephant, the "mandala diagrams"

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The textiles of Indonesia have, across time, also incorporated and integrated Hindu's symbols such as the Garuda, the *naga*, the lotus, the elephant, the "*mandala* diagrams" and so on. In fact, the country's textiles — from apparel to ritualistic hanging, ship cloth and sacred religious cloth — demonstrate the remarkable exchange of ideas, materials, designs and images resulting from Indonesia's Indian trade links.

(source: **Textiles as History - By Pushpa Chari** - hindu.com). For more refer to chapter on **Glimpses XII** to **Glimpses XV**.

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Burma

Burma was known as Indra-Dvipa. Hindu settlements began to be established in Burma before the first century A.D*.* It is contended that this relationship can be traced back to the time of the Buddha. Hindu settlements were set up in Arakan, Tagaung, Srikshetra, Thaton and Pegu at a very early period. Literary and archaeological evidence shows that the entire culture and civilization of Burma was borrowed from India and not from China. Ptolemy, the geographer, tells us that in the 2nd century A.D. many places in Burma had Sanskrit names. Indian religions flourished in Burma. Many religious structures having the images of Indian gods and goddesses have also been found from Burma. Burmese history had been buried for a century or more as part of " Farther India."



The Burmese who are most Hinduised are the **Mons**. Some of their places have Pali names. The Mon kingdom in the 6th century A.D. was known as Dvaravati. The rulers of this kingdom had mostly Indian names. The **Mon settlements of the Hindus were known as Ramanna-desa.**

The Pali literature of Burma on law is based on the **Dharamsastras of Manu, Narada and Yajnavalkya.** The art of Burma was also influenced by the Indian a*rt.*

In Burma, the finest temple is the Ananda at Pagan. It occupies the center of a spacious courtyard which is 564 ft square. There is no doubt of its derivation from Indian type. Temples of the same type existed in Bengal and most probably suggested the model of the Ananda temple.

Charles Duroiselle, pioneer of Burmese Studies in France, who composed the **Epigraphia Birmanica**, says on the **Ananda temple**:

" There can be no doubt that the architects who planned and built the Ananda temple were Indians. Everything in this temple from Sikhara to the basement as well as the numerous stone sculptures found in its corridors and the terra-cotta...adoring its basement and terraces, bear the indubitable stamp of Indian genius and craftsmanship...In this sense, we may take it, therefore, that the Ananda, though built in the Burmese capital, is an Indian temple."

(source: **Ancient India - By R.C. Majumdar** p. 497).

Michael Symes author of **An Account of an Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava in the Year 1795** p. 326 says: "The Burmans, we are told, call their Code generally, Dharmasath or Shastra; it is one among the many commentaries of Manu. Mr. Syme speaks in glowing terms of the Code."

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 180-181).

The names of its rivers are Sanskrit names - Irrawati, Brahmaputra and Chindwin. Her head of state is also known as Adipadi, which is the Sanskrit Adhaipati, referring to the chief executive.

Indian-Hindu influences must certainly have been the strongest if not the earliest influence upon that countryside. The **Sarabha Gate**, still standing, is commonly associated with 9th century **King Pyinbya**. It is the frontispiece to what will become Pagan a century and half later. It is Hindu in design and structure. This great out reach of Indian-Hindu style is also evident in some 9th century ruins surrounding Angkor Wat. This Hindu push through India, Burma, Thailand, Indochina and Indonesia must have been an extraordinary one, certainly equal to the Graeco-Roman thrust on the Mediterranean cultures. It left behind an indelible imprint upon the civilizations of those two peninsulas of Asia stretching deep into the Indian Ocean. The mark of its art, architecture, and its religion are still to be found in these Buddhist and Moslem countries.

Horace Hayman Wilson who used to be professor of Sanskrit at Oxford University, says:

"The civilizations of the Burmese and the Tibetans is derived from India."

(source: **Hindu Superiority - By Har Bilas Sarda** p. 180).

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Sri Lanka or Lankadvipa

Sri Lanka, Sinhala, or Ceylon, which is India's closest neighbor to the south, was possibly the first country in southern Asia to feel the impact of Indian immigration.



The Hindu epic, Ramayana, narrates the story in which Rama's conflict with Ravana, the king of Lanka, is the central theme. Although the history of ancient Sri Lanka is largely a complex of legends, it is undoubted that the early settlers of Lanka came from India. The Aryan migrants, members of the Sinhalas or the Lion Tribe, named their new home Sinhaladvipa, from which has derived its later variations: the Portuguese Ceilao or Zeylan, or the English Ceylon. The coming of the Aryans is represented in the Mahavamsa by the story of Prince Vijaysimha who came from northern India in the sixth century B.C. Close ties were established during the reign of Asoka, with the introduction of Buddhism. In Buddhist shrines,

Hindu deities occupy honored places. Vishnu is particularly popular in Sinhalese Buddhist temples, for he is not considered a rival of the Buddha but the protector of Sri Lanka. Hindu temples were also built, for example, the Shiva temple at Polonnaruva dating probably from the 11th century resembles the South Indian Chola buildings.

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Thailand - Siam

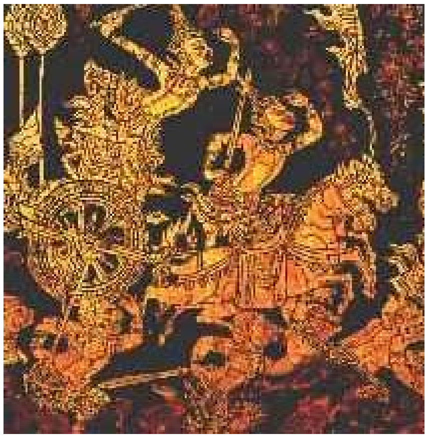
According to **S. Poolthupya** from the Thammasat University in Bangkok, Thailand:

"In the Thai version or Ramayana called the **Ramakien**, brotherly love can be considered one of the main themes. One can see clearly which kind of brotherly love is worthy when one reads the Ramakien, a Thai work of great literary value. The Ramakien shares the universal idea of brotherly love as expressed in the original Ramayana from India."

(source: **Indian Epic Values: Ramayana and Its Impact - By G. Pollet** p. 215-219).



Hindu civilization spread to Siam in early times from about 2nd century A.D. The Hindus set up many colonies in Siam and the most important of them was **Dvaravati** which ruled from Cambodia to the Bay of Bengal up to the 10th century A.D. when it was overthrown by the Kaundinya kingdom. Numerous excavations



have yielded extensive evidence of Indianization and some remarkable piece of art. Because Siam increasingly assimilated Indian art and culture into a local pattern, relics of pure Indian descent are more ancient than those reflecting local influences. One of the most remarkable sites in the center of Siam, is **Srideb** (Crip-teb), where statues of Hindu deities bearing Sanskrit inscriptions of the 5th and 6th century have been discovered. The ast of Srideb is of excellent quality and provides a link between Indian art and the art of Southeast Asia. **Dr. Quartich Wales** considered Srideb the oldest known Hindu temple in Southeast Asia.

Although Thailand is today predominantly Buddhist, there are traces of Hindu influence, visible mostly in the court ceremonials. Until recently, the court Brahmins cast horoscopes, consulted omens, and performed worship of both Hindu and Buddhist deities. Ceremonies of coronation, tonsure, cremation, and lesser rites connected with agriculture were developed by the Brahmins. The Siamese call their coronation by its ancient Sanskrit designation, the **rajabhiseka.** The entire complex of coronation ceremonies, such as homa (sacrifice of Fire), purificatory rites, ablutions, anointment, are closely modelled on Hindu rituals, and are presided over by the **Brah Maha Raja Guru.** The tonsure ceremony in Siam is a rite of initiation of youths, corresponding to the Hindu Cudakarma Mangala, which is very important Hindu Samskara. Cremation, an old vedic rite, is the only means of disposal of the remains of deceased royalty in Siam.

Even today, the kings of Thailand bear the royal title is Rama, a Hindu avatar, and the story of Ramayana is depicted on the palace and temple walls of Bangkok. Hindu festivals such as Dashahara, commemorating the victory of Rama over the demon king Ravana, are still observed in Thailand. The Thais, like the Hindus, still believe in Vishnu or Naryana (Phra Narain), and Mahadeva or Siva, and dislike the asuras (asuns) as the enemies of the devas.



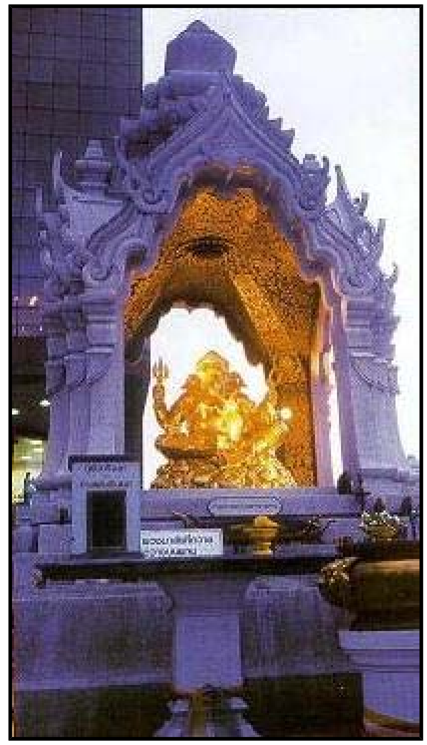
Even today, the kings of Thailand bear the royal title is Rama, a Hindu avatar, and the story of Ramayana is depicted on the palace and temple walls of Bangkok.

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Famous Indian works, such as the Ramayana and Mahabharata, and the Shakuntala have formed the basis of some of the outstanding Siamese literature. The Ramayana, known in Siam as the **Ramakien** "Ram - Akhyan" where **Akhya is a Sanskrit word meaning "rendition of the story of".** It is regarded as Siamese classic. Knowledge of this work is as essential for a cultured Siamese as Homer used to be for an European. The epic and **Puranic literature of India** constituted the principal source of inspiration not only for Siam but for the whole of Southeast Asia. It provided the themes for classical theatre, shadow theatre, and marionette shows.

Indian influence is clearly seen on Siamese dance, drama, and music. Many of the themes of Siam's various dance-dramas (lakhon-ram) are drawn from Indian stories: for example, **the story of Savitri and Satyavan.** Many Thai musical instruments closely resemble those of India. The Siamese legal system is directly descended from the Manusmriti. The Hindu **Dharmasastras**, provided the framework for Siamese justice.





Lord Ganesha sits majestically in an exquisitely crafted shrine outside the Bangkok World Trade Center, Thailand.
(source: Hinduism Today - December 1999).

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Malaya or Sri Vijaya

The greatest of the states was the **Sailendra Empire**, or the empire of **Shri Vijaya,** which became the dominant power both on sea and land in the whole of Malaysia by the eighth century. The empire was also a sea Power based on trade. Hence you find that it had ports wherever it could get the smallest footing. Indeed a remarkable feature of the settlements of the Sumatrian State was their strategic value - that is to say, they were carefully located at places where they could command the surrounding seas. Often they were in pairs to help each other in maintaining this command. Thus, Singapore, which is a great city now, was originally a settlement of the Sumatran colonists. The name, as you will notice, is a typical Indian name: **Singhpur**. The Sumatran people had another settlement just opposite the Straits, facing Singhpur. Sometimes they would stretch an iron chain right across the Strait and so stop all ships from passing till they paid heavy tolls.

(source: **Glimpses of World History - By Jawaharlal Nehru** p. 135).



The language and culture of Malaysia is still Sanskrit and Hindu. Take the name of Kuala Lumpur. The suffix 'Pur' is a Sanskrit termination used to signify a township. the original Sanskrit name was Cholanampuram. i.e. the city of the Cholas. A city in mountainous north Malaysia is called Sungei Pattani. Its ancient Sanskrit name was Shringa Pattan meaning ' a mountain city.' Another town Seramban is



'Shree Ram Van' i.e. the bower of Lord Rama.

In Malaysia, the commander-in-chief is still called Lakshmana -- a remnant of the role played by Rama's brother in the battle of Lanka.

Of **Shailendra**, the mighty man of war and conquest and other achievements, **Dr. H. G. Quaritch Wales** has written:

"This great conqueror, whose achievements can only be compared with those of the greatest soldiers known to western history, and whose fame in his time sounded from Persia to China, in a decade or two built up a vast maritime empire which endured for five centuries, and made possible the marvelous flowering of Indian art and culture in Java and Cambodia. Yet in our encyclopedias and histories...one will search in vain for a reference to this far-flung, empire or to its noble founder...The very fact of such an empire ever existed is scarcely known, except by a handful of Oriental scholars."

(source: In '**Towards Angkor**' Harrap, 1937).

Indian literature also mentions kingdoms, Kalaspura, Kamalanka (Karmaranga), which were probably in the Malay Peninsula, Kala (Kedah), and Pahang. In the Puranas, mention is often made to Katahadvipa (Kataha), which was included amongst the nine divisions of the world across the seas, and to which regular voyeages were undertaken from Tamaralipti. Various other references to katahadvipa are found in Sanskrit dramas and stories. The Tamil epic, Silappadkiaram, of the second century contains description of tall, roomy ships entering a city in South India laden with a variety of goods and spices from a Malayan port called Tondi. Malaysia peninsula derives its name from the Sanskrit word Malaya. Its other name was Vanga from its abundance of 'tin' because in Sanskrit 'Vanga' means tin.

Kedah is by far the most important of Malayan sites. The Pallavas founded settlements in Kedah, on the Bujang River, whose temple ruins have yielded an image of Ganesha and other objects of Saiva faiths.



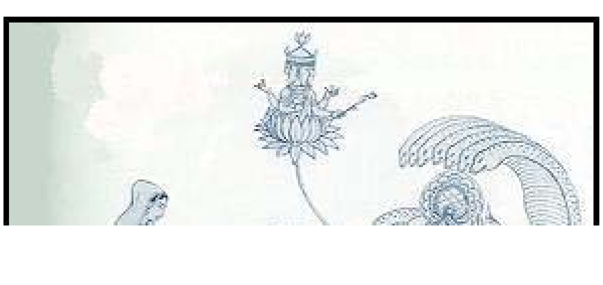
The **Kedah Annals** record how on conversion to Islam the Malays destroyed all the idols they were accustomed to worship, together with the idols handed down from their ancestors. Concepts of state and kingship in Malaya, royal titles such as **Seri Paduka**, ceremonies connected with coronation, and royal prerogatives are clearly of Indian inscription. Malaya's literature and folklore are deeply influenced by the Hindu epics, the **Ramayana, and the Mahabharata.** Her language has many Sanskrit loan words, and until the introduction of Arabic and, later Roman script, Indian scripts were used in Malaya and the Archipelago.

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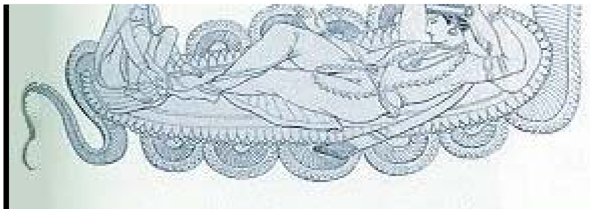
Cambodia or Khamboja

Cambodia boasts the largest temple complex in the world, named Ankor, from the Sanskrit meaning "the capital city".

It was the water which brought the richness and cultural evolution to this country. **According to an ancient Sanskrit inscription, Cambodia was born from the water. Being the oldest Indianised state in Southeast Asia, its religion was Hinduism.**



It was built in the ninth century C. E. in honor of the Hindu god **Lord Vishnu. The complex extends over an area more than twice the size of Manhattan and took thirty-seven years to complete.** Its physical and spiritual grandeur is found elsewhere only in ancient Greece, Egypt and among the Mayan and Aztec civilizations. Cambodia's principle river is



VISHNU RESTS ON THE SERPENT ANANTA.

today called Me Kong, which scholars say is derived from India's Ma Ganga (Mother Ganges). Kaundinya founded the prosperous kingdom of Khamboja in the first century A.D. **We are told that some of the essential elements of Indian culture spread to Kamboja, eg, Sanskrit, Saivism, Vaishnavism, and Buddhism.**

James Ferguson, author of **History of Indian and Eastern Architecture,** wrote in 1876,

"To the historian of art the wonder is to find temples with such a singular combination of styles in such a locality - Indian temples constructed with pillars almost purely classical in design, and ornamented with bas-relief so strangely Egyptian in character."

(source: **Angkor: Heart of an Asian Empire** p. 43).

Professor and archaeologist **Bernard Philippe Groslier,** author of **Angkor, Art and Civilization** wrote: "The expansion of India towards the countries of the East, at the very moment when by a striking coincidence China seemed to be moving southwards to encounter it, constitutes one of the turning-points of history, paralleled by the expansion of Greece and Rome."

(source: **Splendors of the Past: Lost Cities of the Ancient World** - National Geographic Society. p. 190).

S. Sarin, has written: "The Cambodian country, with its own language, knows Sanskrit as well since the dawn of history and some learned scholars speak of Indo-Khmer culture, as the aspects of question are interconnected to one another. So viewed, the deep cause of the noble sense of gratefulness in Cambodian behavior is firstly due to the **Ramayana**, which had been well-known, for example through the bas-relief of Angkor Temples." In Cambodian language, **Tin Gun** meaning "knowing, acknowledging what has been done, grateful." In Cambodian way of speaking, people have Tin, and **Gun (guna), "quality."**

(source: **Indian Epic Values: Ramayana and Its Impact - By G. Pollet** p.222-228).

Around the second century AD, Indians arrived in Funan (South Cambodia-Vietnam), and a **Brahmin named Kaundinya married the daughter of the local Naga king and introduced Hindu religion and culture and Sanskrit to the region.** The power center shifted to Angkor from the ninth to fifteenth centuries A.D. The founder of the first Angkor at Rolous (ancient Hariharalaya) and the Devaraja or god-king cult was Jayavarman II. His descendant Indravarman I built the first temple-mountain or Mount Meru at Bakong and a temple tank or Indratataka, both of which were to define Angkorean temples of the future. Three other Angkorean sites were Phnom Bakheng on a natural hill, Yashodharapura where the king Suryavarman II built the great Angkor Wat, and the mysterious Angkor Thom.



Cambodia achieved what the Indian subcontinent never could: the confluence of Hindu cults and regional cultures. The culture is frozen in time, limited to concepts from the Vedas, Ramayana and Mahabharata, unlike temples in India that are Puranic. Every temple recreates the ancient concept of jambudvipa with Mount Meru at the center, as a tall multi-tiered pyramid. The garbagriha at the top of Meru is a literal recreation of the womb of the universe, and the deity within is the source of creation, something we forget when we enter crowded sanctum sanctorums in India. The outside walls are decorated with the gods, dvarapalas and beautiful apsaras with whom the local women identify. The main object of veneration may be Shiva or Vishnu or Buddha, but the walls would contain stories of Rama, Krishna and the ascetic Shiva on a hill. The most popular motif is the samudra manthana, the churning of the ocean by the devas and asuras for the divine nectar, where the tortoise is the base on which Mount Meru is placed and churned, unlike later Indian literature where Vishnu is identified with the tortoise. There are several Sanskrit inscriptions written in Pallava Grantha.

Angkor Wat is truly a wonder. **It occupies about 500 acres bounded on all four sides by a wall and an enclosed tank.** The causeways, flanked by enormous nagas and lions, represent rainbows. The temple is 65 metres high, made up of three platforms, progressively smaller, with covered galleries defining the borders, and is a replica of the cosmos. **The first level contains 1200 square metres of carved sandstone galleries illustrating scenes from the Ramayana** and **Mahabharata.**

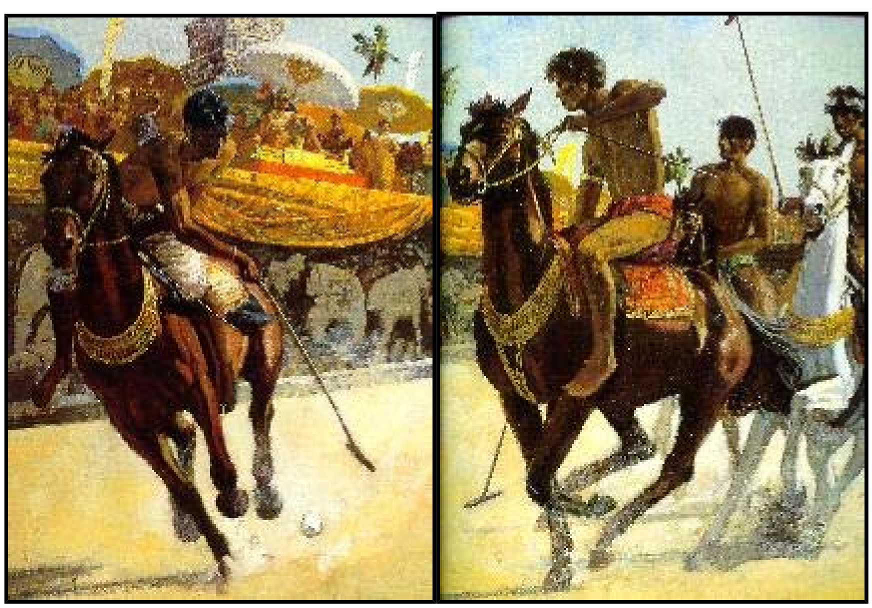
(source: **The temples of Angkor - By Nanditha Krishna - newindpress.com**).

George Coedes, who in 1906, at the age of 20, published a long Sanskrit inscription from Cambodia and who over the next 60 years translated hundreds of complex Sanskrit and Khmer texts with wide-ranging significance and bearing.

"According to the Sanskrit epigraphy, iconography, and Chinese dynastic histories, Hinduism and Buddhism existed side by side in Cambodia during the fifth and sixth centuries. The main religion seems to have been Sivaism, one of the two major branches of Hinduism, but the other branch, Visnuism, also had adherents in the royal family." "The grammatical work of Panini, the greatest grammarian of antuiquity, was highly prized in Cambodia, particularly among Sivaites. An Indian tradition held that it was Siva himself who had revealed the secrets of grammar to Panini."

(source: **The religions of ancient Cambodia, Bhattacharya**.)

For some time, Kambuja became a dependency of Java. However, it became independent once again under Jaya-varman who ruled from 802A.D. to 825 A.D. He invited Hiranyadama, a Brahmin from India. He changed his capital many times and finally fixed it in the Ankor region where the famous city of Ankor Thom grew up. Jayavarman III laid the foundations of the great Kambuja empire. Yasovarma became king in 889 A.D. He was the founder of the Kambuja empire and the Ankor civilization. There was the spread of Sanskrit language in the country. **The king himself has been compared with Panini and he is stated to have written a commentary on the Mahabhasya of Patanjali. The Khmer took everything from India, from irrigation to astronomy and religion.**



Polo players played under the eye of King Jayavarman VII, seated beneath a parasol on the royal Elephant Terrace at Angkor Thom. The popular sport, also depicted in relief, sometimes matched commoners against noblemen, according to accounts.

(source: **Splendors of the Past: Lost Cities of the Ancient World** - National Geographic Society. p. 210)

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The art of Kambuja is of Indian origin. The most famous example of the Kamboja art is the **Angkor Vat** which was built by **King Suryavarman II**. It is a massive structure surrounded by a canal tow and half miles long and 650 feet broad. Three concentric squares form decreasing terraces, elevated one above another with long galleries of of repeated columns crowned by the final towers, which soar up in the sky in one splendid sweep of graceful symmetry.

The choice of Angkor as the site of the Khmer capital stemmed from several factors. First, it was near the geographical center of the kingdom. Second, the Tonle Sap, the great lake with its outlet to the riverine network of the Mekong, provided excellent communications with the outside world. Finally, there was the great lake itself. **"The grand lake, is a very rare geographical phenomenon**." In the summer, when you have the melting of snow in Tibet and the beginning of the monsoon rains, the Mekong carries so much water that some of it backs up into the Tonle Sap, which expands to ten times its normal area. By November or December, the Mekong slows down and the water again flows out of the lake. Every year this brings fresh deposits of fertile soil to the lands along the shore. It is the best possible land for growing rice.

The capital became famous in Asia and was known as **'Angkor the Magnificent,' a city of a million inhabitants, larger and more splendid than the Rome of the Ceasers.** Near the city stood the vast temple of Angkor Vat. The empire of Khamboja flourished till the end of the 13th century and accounts of a Chinese envoy who visited it in 1297 describes the wealth and splendor of its capital.

Amaury de Riencourt has written:

Art flourished in Kamboja as never before, centered around a capital city known to all Asia as Angkor, the Magnificent, a city of more than a million inhabitants - which when it was extricated from the jungle in modern times, contained not a single human being. Chinese and Indian envoys could hardly believe their eyes when they gazed at the splendid temple of Angkor Vat, **a sublime work of art that was inspired by India** but shaped by the genius of Khmer people."

(source: **The Soul of India - By Amaury de Riencourt** ISBN 0907855032 p. 160-161).



French architect Lucien Fournereau's paintings of the splendor of Angkor Wat displayed at the Paris Salon in 1890.
*(source: **Angkor: Heart of an Asian Empire - By Bruno Dagens** p.1).*

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About Angkor, **Osbert Sitwell,** in his book **Escape with Me - an Oriental Sketch Book** (1941), has written:



"Let it be said immediately that Angkor, as it stands, ranks as chief wonder of the world to-day, one of the summits to which human genius has aspired in stone, infinitely more impressive, lovely and, as well, romantic, than anything that can be seen in China...The material remains of a civilization that flashed its wings, of the utmost brilliance, for six centuries, and then perished so utterly that even his name has died on the lips of man." 'the neighboring Bayon can be said to be the most imaginative and singular in the world, more lovely than Angkor Vat, because more unearthly in its conception, a temple from a city in some other distant planet...imbued with the same elusive beauty that often lives between the lines of a great poem."

Round the great temple of Angkor Vat is a vast area of mighty ruins with artificial lakes and pools, and canals and bridges over them, and a great gate dominated by ' a vast sculptured head, a lovely, smiling but enigmatic Cambodian face, though one raised to the power and beauty of a god.' The face with its strangely fascinating and disturbing smile - the 'Angkor smile' is repeated again and again.

(source: **The Discovery of India - By Jawaharlal Nehru.** p.208-209).

"Its splendid plan, the balance of its proportions, the elegance of its pillared cloisters and the beauty of its decoration make it one of the masterpieces of world architecture."

(source: **The Oriental World** - **By Jeannine Auboyer** Landmarks of World's Art quoted from Appendix page).

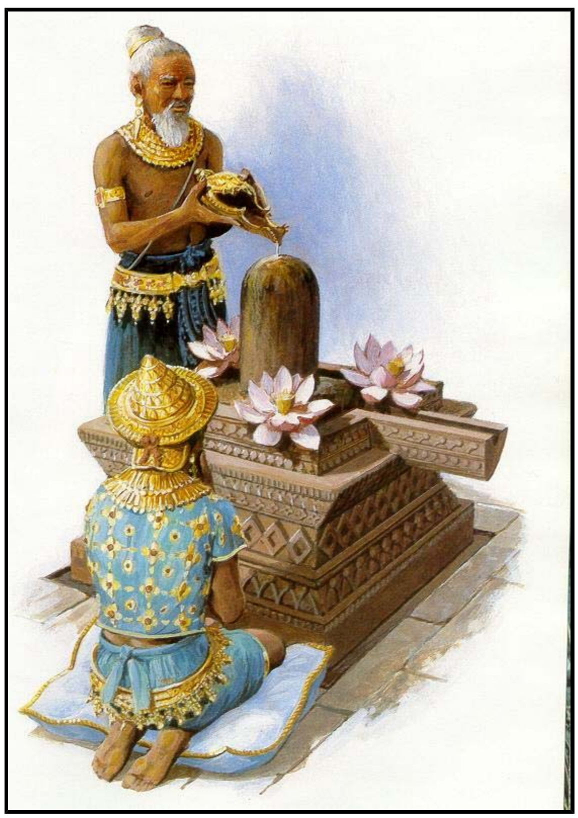
Helen Ibbitson Jessup author of **Sculpture of Angkor and Ancient Cambodia: Millennium of Glory** captures to near perfection the overwhelming **sensation of awe and mystery that Angkor – among the greatest, and the most ambitious, of architectural monuments in the world – produces in the heart of even the most hardened, or casual, visitor. For the site, with its sprawling, seemingly endless, expanse and decay does not sum up the past of Cambodia alone, but, in some ways, of mankind itself.**

The majestic site: miles of 'gallery and tower', ancient temples soaring heavenwards and crumbling at the same time, monuments to man's faith and energy, stone and root and dust.

(source: **Angkor: The curling roots of time** - tribuneindia.com).

Sacred River Discovered in Cambodia
Source: Sunday Times, London

Cambodia, Vietnam: In the jungle of Cambodia, at the site of Phnom Kulen, 20 miles from the temple complex at Angkor Wat, **a priceless devotional work of art, the "River of a Thousand Lingas," has been discovered.** Carved in the rock of a riverbed, the Siva Lingas blessed the water flowing over them from the mountain as it irrigated the rice paddy fields or provided a water source to the **ancient city of Angkor** on the plains. Similar river carvings exist in India. Dating as far back as **802 ce, when the Hindu Khmer Empire** ruled most of Southeast Asia, the Phnom Kulen plateau has multiple temples with sculptures of elephants and lions six meters high. However, the Vietnamese war has left its mark on this holy site. The area is infested with landmines and the Cambodian government, lacking in funds to nurture the temples, has tendered its development out to a company headed by Seang Nam, the MP for Siem Reap. A road has been cleared to the Phnom Kulen temples where there are plans for a hotel. Looters are stealing precious carvings from the site to sell in Bangkok.



Khmer Monarch pays homage to Lord Shiva while his personal priest pours offering of melted ghee and lotus.
(source: **Splendors of the Past: Lost Cities of the Ancient World** *- National Geographic Society. p. 197).*

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Ganesha Displayed in Cambodia's National Museum
http://www.hinduismtoday.com/hpi/2001/5/9.html#3

Phnom Penh, Cambodia, May 9, 2001: Phnom Penh's National Museum of Art, forgotten for many years, is once again showing the world its true colors. The extraordinary collection of bronze and stone statues on display here is unmatched elsewhere in the world. Tragically, looting and war have removed most of the decorative statues and reliefs from Angkor's temples, making the museum's collection all the more important as evidence of the artistic achievements of this ancient culture. The first temporary exhibition in the museum's history took place last year, with **a display of statues of Ganesh, the elephant-headed Hindu god. Other gems include the 7th-century statue of the horse-headed Vaijmukha and a delightful tiny 11th-12th century bronze figure of a dancing woman on a lotus flower.** Beauty is only part of it. For these are sacred objects, and the museum has taken care to position them much as they would have been placed in temples. Indeed, many of the Cambodians who come to the museum are not simply admiring art works -- they are paying homage to holy icons and small shrines have been set up where offerings of flowers can be made.



*The walls surrounding the compound – the oldest part of The Royal Palace – are covered with frescos depicting episodes from the Khmer version of **Ramayana**, the Reamker.*

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Cambodia's **national flag**, which features the **imposing facade of Angkor Wat**, the 12th century Hindu temple dedicated to **Lord Vishnu**, **is only one of the symbols of how deeply internalized India is in the collective consciousness of the Cambodian people.**

(source: **Cambodia embraces India's pride - By Shobori Ganguli - dailypioneer.com** 4//11/02).

It is a pity India has forgotten the Angkors. A visit to Siem Reap is essential to understand Hinduism and to appreciate Indian art. There is a visible happiness in the deities that is rare in the more withdrawn imagery of India. The temples are mysterious and haunting as they brood over

the dark jungle, guarding secrets of an ancient people lost in time.

(source: **The temples of Angkor - By Nanditha Krishna - newindpress.com**).

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Philippines or part of Sri Vijaya Empire

Philippines was for a time part of the Sri Vijaya Empire, which has been described by Filippino historians, as Hinduistic in culture.

Dr Pardo de Tavera has observed:

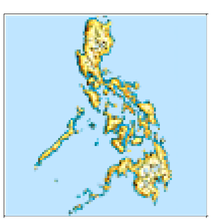
"It is impossible to believe that the Hindus, if they came only as merchants, however great their number, would have impressed themselves in such a way as to give to these islanders, the Philippines, the number and the kind of words, which they did give. These names of dignitaries, of caciques, of high functionaries of the court, of noble ladies, indicate that these high positions, with names of Sanskrit origin, were occupied at one time by men, who spoke that language. The words of similar origin, for objects of war, fortresses and battle songs, for designating objects of religious beliefs, for superstitions, emotions, feelings, industrial and farming activities, show us clearly that the warfare, religion, literature, industry and agriculture were at once time in the hands of the Hindus and that this race was effectively dominant in the Philippines."

(source: **El Sanscrito en la langua Tagalag - T H Pardo de Tavera** Paris 1887; **The Philippines and India - Dhirendra Nath Roy** Manila 1929 and **India and The World - By Buddha Prakash** p. 119-120).

According to **Alfred Louis Kroeber** (1876-1960), American anthropologist, and a major figure in the founding of modern anthropology, as well as author of **Peoples of the Philippines** (1919):

"Most of the folklore of the Philippines is of Hindu origin."

"There is no tribe in the Philippines no matter how primitive and remote, in whose culture today elements of **Indian origin** cannot be traced." Pre-Spanish Philippine society with its nobility, code of laws, and political procedure, was largely of Indian cast. Some years ago when a legislative building was put in Manila, the capital, four figures were carved on its facade illustrating the source of the Philippine culture, one of which is Manu, the ancient Indian lawgiver. **Beyer**, the first to conduct systematic archaeological investigation in the Philippines, finds formidable evidence to strengthen the view that there was pre-Christian contact between India and Southeast Asia.



The Hindu element in the ancient Philippine religious beliefs, and in the names of old Philippine gods, and of legendary heroes is quite apparent. Several religious objects have been unearthed in the island of Mactan, including two images of Hindu deities.

Two Filipino scholars, Tavera and Paterno, have concluded that about 25 % of the Philippine vocabularies can be traced to Indian influence.

For instance: bahagi (part, portion), in Tagalog is bhag in Hindi,
katha (story, fiction) - katha;
diwata (god or goddess) is devata
dukha (poor, destitute) is duhkha
guru (teacher) is guru
mukha (face) is mukha
yaya (nurse) is aya and so on..

Philippine literature, stories, and folklore are traceable to India. The Maranawa epic -

An adaptation of "The Ramayana," the 4th century Indian epic, as preserved by the Maranao people of the South Philippines. A story of the battle between good and evil, with love, deceit, heroism and triumph

http://www.tabacofamily.com/jtabaco/india.asp



"Rajah Mangandiri" or "the Ramayana of the Philippines. Certain parts of southeast Asia, including the southern Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia, were dominated by the Hindu culture of the Sri Vidyayah Empire from the 4th to the 10th centuries, said a press release. Some aspects of Hindu culture, for instance the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, have thrived in those regions to the present day.

http://www.indiaabroadonline.com/PublicAccess/ia-12082000/Arts/Philippine.html

The history of Malacca is largely the story of the city for which it is named, and the story of the city of Malacca begins with the fascinating and partly legendary tale of the Hindu prince Parameswara.

An eminent historian of the Philippines suggests ethnic affinity between Indians and Filipinos, because of which certain racial qualities of the Filipinos - their dignity of bearing, their stoical outlook on life, and their indifference to pain and misfortune - were inherited from the Hindus.

(source: **Philippine Political and Cultural History - By G. F. Zaide** p. 45).

When the Philippines drafted its Constitution, it placed the statue of Manu in the Assembly Hall with this inscription on its base: "The first, the greatest and the wisest law-giver of mankind." Researches into the racial and cultural origins of the Philippines increasingly prove that it was colonized by some people in South India. In fact, the script of the Filipinos has some obvious similarities with that of South India. "Our dialects belong to the Dravidian family." says Justice Romualdez. "The names of some places on the shores of Manila Bay and the coast of Luzon show their Sanskrit origin."

Indian influence is most patent in handicrafts and the old names of coins used there. Many social customs current there show a likeness to the Indian ones. Saleeby says, "The head-gods of the Indian Triad and the earliest Vedic gods had the foremost place in the minds and devotion of the hill-tribes of Luzon and Mindanao. A Ganesha statue too was found there. Indeed as Beyer says, "India has most profoundly affected the Philippine civilization."

Even the national flower of Philippines is the Indian champaka. The Indian influence on Philippines is explicable by the fact that it was that it was for 150 years a colony of a Java-based Hindu Empire of Sri Vijaya.

(source: **The Soul of India - By Satyavrata R Patel** p. 30).

For more information on Philippines refer to chapter on **Glimpses XV**.

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Japan

Professor H. Nakamura of Japan:

"India is culturally, Mother of Japan. For centuries it has, in her own characteristic way, been exercising her influence on the thought and culture of Japan."

"The study of Japanese thought is the study of Indian thought." - Eminent Zen Scholar, **Dr. D. Suzuki.**

(source: **India: Mother Of Us All - By Chaman Lal** p. 25).

Sir Charles Elliot (1862-1931), British diplomat and colonial administrator, in his book, **Hinduism and Buddhism**, vol. I, p 405 wrote:

"**Zen is the Japanese equivalent of Sanskrit Dhyana** (meditation) or Ch'an and is the name given to the sect founded in China by Bodhidharma.

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Hinduism and Buddhism went from India to China and Korea to Japan. Those Indian ideas which found their way to Japan were transmitted through China or Central Asia, although there had been some direct contact between India and Japan by sea. According to a scholar of ethnology, there is evidence of the presence of an Indian community in the Shima district in Mie prefecture. **These Indians were called Tenjiku Ronin, meaning the "masterless Indian samurai."**

Images of Ganesha and Vishnu have been found throughout Japan. Numerous Buddhist deities were introduced into Japan and many of these are still very popular.



According to **D. P. Singhal**, "some Hindu gods, who had been incorporated into the Buddhist pantheon, were amongst them. For example, **Indra,** originally, the god of thunder but now also the king of gods, is popular in Japan as **Taishaku** (literally the great King Sakra);

(source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** Part II p. 80-98).

Ganesha is worshipped as Sho-ten or Shoden (literally, holy god) in many Buddhist temples, and is believed to confer happiness upon his devotees. There are some rare Ganesha bronzes as Vinayaka in Japan. A sea-serpent worshipped by sailors is called Ryujin, a Chinese equivalent of the Indian naga. **Hariti and Dakini** are also worshipped, the former as **Kishimo-jin**, and the latter by her original name. Bishamon is a Japanese equivalent of the Indian Vaisravana (**Kubera**), the god of wealth. Sakira s an old name of **Indra** by which he is chiefly known in Japan.

Even Shinto adopted Indian gods, despite its desperate efforts after the Meiji Revolution to disengage itself from Buddhism. The Indian sea god **Varuna,** is worshipped in Tokyo as Sui-ten (water-god); the Indian goddess of learning, **Saraswati**, has become Benten (literally, goddess of speech), with many shrines dedicated to her along sea coasts and beside lakes and ponds.



Shiva is well known to the Japanese as **Daikoku** (literally, god of darkness), which is a Chinese and Japanese equivalent of the Indian Mahakala, another name of Shiva. Daikoku is a popular god in Japan. At the Kotohira shrine on the island of Shikoku, sailors worship a god called **Kompera**, which is a corruption of the Sanskrit word for crocodile, Kumbhira. The divine architect mentioned in the Rig Veda, **Vishvakarma**, who designed and constructed the world, was regarded in ancient Japan as the god of carpenters, Bishukatsuma.

The Indian **Yama**, the god of death, is the most dreaded god of Japan, under the name of **Emma-o**, the king of hell. There is some Indian influence on Japanese art. A similarity between Shinto rituals and Hindu rituals - for example ringing the bell as one enters the temple.

The climbers wearing traditional white dress, who scale the sacred Mount Ontake as a religious observance, sometimes have inscribed on their robe Sanskrit *Siddham* characters of an ancient type. Sometimes they put on white Japanese scarfs (tenugui) which carry the Sanskrit character OM, the sacred syllable of the Hindus.

According to author, **Terence Dukes**,

"The Gagaku dances of Japan contain many movements derived from the **Indian Nata** and the Chinese

Chuan Fa."

(source: **The Boddhisattva Warriors: The Origin, Inner Philosophy, History and Symbolism of the Buddhist Martial Art Within India and China** p.206).

The cultivation of cotton in Japan is traced to an Indian who had drifted to the shore of Aichi Prefecture in 799. To commemorate the event, the Japanese named the village where the shipwrecked Indian had landed Tenjiku; **Tenjiku was the Japanese name for India, and means Heaven.**



The popular Japanese game of **sunoroku** or sugoroku (backgammon played at the royal of the Nara rulers and still popular in Japan is of Indian origin. In Japan the game is played as nard. Nard is generally regarded as an Iranian game, but the ninth century Arab scholar, **Al Yaqubi,** considered nard an Indian invention used to illustrate man's dependence on chance and destiny. According to **Wei-Shu**, sugoroku was brought to China in ancient times from Hu country, which at that time meant a country somewhere in the vicinity of India. Again, as **Karl Himly** has pointed out, the Hun Tsun, Sii, written during the Sung period (960-1279), states that t'shu-pu, another Chinese name for sugoruku, was invented in western India, that it was known in its original form as **chatushpada**, and that it reached China during the Wei period (220-265).

Indian legends also found their way into Japanese literature. An example of this is the legend of **Rishyasringa** in which a rishi who had never seen a woman was seduced by Shanta, the daughter of King Lomapada. This is a very famous story in the **Mahabharata**. In the Japanese version the saint is named **Ikkaku Sennin**, that is **Ekasrnga** (Unicorn). The Kakuki drama, **Narukami,** was derived from this legend. Many such Indian stories were incorporated into Buddhist literature and conveyed to Japan.

Kukai started the study of Sanskrit letters, known as **Shittan, a Japanese equivalent of the Sanskrit word Siddham,** with which ancient Indian inscriptions and works often begin. Before this, during the Nara period, the Vinaya; the Abhidharmakosa by Vasubandhu; the Satyasiddhi by Harivarman; the works of Nagarjuna and Aryadeva; the Vijnaptimatrata, Buddhist idealism, and the Gandhavyuha sutra had been studied.

In some Japanese temples, very ancient manuscripts in Sanskrit are preserved intact. It is significant that many of those manuscripts found in Japan are much older than those preserved in India.

(source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal** Part II p.20-27).

According to author **Donald A. Mackenzie**: "The Indian form of myth of the **Churning of the Milky Ocean** reached Japan. In a Japanese illustration of it the mountain rests on a tortoise, and the supreme god sits on the summit, grasping in one of his hands a water vase. The Japanese Shinto myth of creation, as related in the **Ko-ji-ki** and **Nihon-gi**, is likewise a churning myth. Twin deities, Izanagi, the god, and Izanami, the goddess, sand on "the floating bridge of heaven" and thrust into the ocean beneath the "Jewel Spear of Heaven". With this pestle they churn the primeval waters until they curdle and form land."

(source: **Myths of Pre-Columbian America** - **By Donald A. Mackenzie** p.190-191).

Indian Influence on Japanese Stories

A considerable portion of the cosmogonical and mythological literature of Japan bears traces of Indian influence. Hajime Nakamura observed ‘ Some stories of ancient India were very influential in shaping Japanese stories by providing them with materials. In the process of shaping, however, Indian materials were greatly modified and adapted in such a way as would appeal to the mentality of common people of Japan in general’ quoted from **Lokesh Chandra** and others – **India’s Contribution to World Thought and Culture**.

Post Wheeler also said ‘Many fragments of the Japanese myth-mass were unmistakably Indian. The original homeland of the first man and women of Japanese mythology is said to have been in the Earth-Residence-Pillar i.e. Mount Meru of Indian mythology. There is another story of Buro-no-Kami whose identity has been established with the deity called Brave-Swift-Impetuous-male. This Kami may be none other than the Indian deity Gavagriva, the Ox-head deity. The story recounts in the style of the jatakas how the deity

punished the heartless rich brother and rewarded the king hearted poor brother. In India one of the names of the moon is Sasanka (lit. having a rabbit in the lap) and there is an ancient Indian legend why it is so called. The belief prevalent in ancient Japan that there lived a rabbit in the moon was probably an outcome of the Indian influence.

The story of the monkey and the crocodile mentioned in the Jataka appears in a slightly modified form in Sasekishu, a medieval Japanese collection of popular stories. The story is referred to in a work by Nichiren 1222-82 a.d. and also in Konjaku-monogatari. Another Puranic story of the sage Rsyarnga is likely to have reach Japan in the trail of Buddhist legends. A famous medieval Japanese drama Narukami has been based on this story.

These instances clearly illustrate the nature and extent of Indian influences on Japanese stories.

Japanese literature is also replete with instances of the influence of the Indian **Theory of Karma and the transmigration of the soul.** Although Buddhist deities like Buddha, Maitreya, Amitabha and Vairocana predominate Japanese literature; **Hindu gods are also quite well known.**

God	**Indian Name**	**Japanese Name**
1. Seagod	Varuna	Suiten
2. King of Gods	Indira	Taishakuten
3. God of Success	Ganesha	Shoten
4. God of Wealth	Kuvera	Bishamon
5. Goddess of Learning	Sarasvati	Benten
6. Goddess of Fortune	Laksmi	Kichijoten
7. Mahesh	Shiva	Daikoku
8. Divine Architect	Visvakarman	Bishukatsuma

In the annals of the Todaji temple, it has been stated that the **worship of Sarasvati and Laksmi was first introduced in 722 A.D.** and continued down the centuries. In Bessom Zakki (Description of Gods) written in the 12th century written in the Siddham script, a corrupt Sanskrit mantra reads: ‘Sarasvatai svaha namo sarasvatyai mahadevyai svaha, namo bhagavati mahadevi sarasvati sidhyatu mantrapadami svaha’. A description of Sarasvati occurs in the voluminous text Asabasho by Shocho 1205-82 and the rituals connected with her worship have been recorded by Ryoson 1279 to 1349 in Chapter CXLIX of his Byaku-hokku-sho (The White Jewel of Indian Tradition). The adoption of these Hindu deities into the Buddhist and Shintonist pantheons of Japan indicate the influence of India on Japanese religions as well as the syncretic character of the religious systems of Japan.

The Japanese language like Sanskrit is inflectional. Its rules governing syntax, morphology, phonology and semantic structure follow a pattern of its own. The forty-seven letters of the Japanese alphabet are said to have been devised by the Japanese Buddhist saint Kobo Daishi 774-835, after the Sanskrit alphabet. **The arrangement of the Japanese syllabary based on the Sanskrit system is also attributed to the influence of Bodshisena in Japan,** which, according to Riri Nakayama, ‘will continue as long as the Japanese language continues to exist’. It has been pointed out that the old Japanese song ‘Iroha-uta’ which contains all the 47 Japanese letters, is a liberal translation of a Sanskrit Buddhist hymn in the Mahaparinirvana-Sutra. The Indian script known as Siddham, called His-t’an in Chinese and Shittan in Japanese gained currency in Japan for writing Sanskrit from the 8th century. It was introduced by Kobo who was responsible for bringing Mantrayana Buddhism from China to Japan.

The survey made above reveals the immense contribution of India to the theology of Japanese Buddhism as well as to Japanese literature. The present indications are that the texts utilized were all written in Sanskrit, probably in the Siddham script, and there was no intrusion of Pali, unlike in the Buddhist countries of

South-East Asia.

Shinto is a polytheistic religion, venerating a vast pantheon of *kami* (gods or spirits) which range from the local deities of mountains or streams to the sun goddess *Amaterasu*. **Shintoism (literally, "the way of the gods") has been designated by some scholars as the Japanese version of Hinduism - says author Chaman Lal.**

(source: **Japan - esamskriti.com**).

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Korea

Hindu Princess Went to Korea

Korean historians believe that Queen Huh was a princess of an ancient kingdom in Ayodhya.

She went to Korea some two-thousand years ago and started the Karak dynasty by marrying a local king, Suro. Today, the historians say, Queen Huh's descendants number more than six-million, including the South Korean president - Kim Dae Jung.

A 16-year-old princess from **Ayuta (Ayodhya) went to Korea in 48 ce.** A 13th-century Korean text recounts Princess Heo Hwang-ok explaining that her parents: "dreamt a God came who said, 'I have sent down Suro to be king of Kaya. Suro is a holy man and is not yet married. So send your daughter to be his Queen." She sailed from India, taking a stone pagoda (left) to what is now Kimhae city. South Korea's 72nd generation descendents of King Suro believe they are related to India's present day Raja Bimlendra Mohan Prasad Mishra, whose ancestors ruled Ayodhya. (Both families have two fishes as their insignia.) They sent delegations to India to built a monument in Ayodhya to commemorate the relationship. Though Mishra is unable to trace his ancestry back more than 300 years, he is happy to accept the Koreans' belief and their initiative to invest $2 billion to make Ayodhya a sister city of Kimhae. "It will lead to the progress of Ayodhya and I am happy, " he said. "The fact that it is associated with my family makes it special."

(source: **Korean memorial to Indian princess** - BBC.com).

South Koreans may have Indian genes

A genetic discovery in South Korea has claimed that Koreans could have an Indian ancestor 2000 years ago.

As was reported by leading South Korean newspaper Joong Ang Daily on Friday, researchers in an archaeological survey at ancient royal tomb of Gimhae in South Gyeongsang province, found some evidence to support claims that Koreans have DNA traceable to South or South East Asian ethnic groups like Indian, Malaysian or Thai.

Dr Seo Jeong-sun of Seoul National University and Kim Jong-il of Hallym University conducted the research and decoded the entire genetic code of ancient Korean remains. They have recently presented their findings at a meeting of the Korea Genome Organisation in Chuncheon, Gangwong province. T**he findings have gained interests in the backdrop of the popular romantic legend of an Indian princess married to a Korean king of the Great Gaya dynasty. According to the legend, the Korean king from Southeast Korea, Kim Su-ro, married an Indian princess, Heo Hwang-ok, from the ancient Indian kingdom of Ayodhya.**

The stories say that Heo travelled by ship to Korea. The Great Gaya dynasty ruled Southeast Korea till 562 AD. In fact, Heo is still a common family name in Korea. The researchers now say that the myth could turn out to be true, according to the daily. More studies are in the offing. The genetic study at Gimhae tomb focused on the mitochondrial DNA in the human remains.

(source: **South Koreans may have Indian genes -economictimes.com).**

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Nepal

India's immediate neighbors Nepal and Tibet, owe much of their cultural inheritance to contact with India. Originally the word Nepal implied the Valley, which, surrounded by the peaks of the Himalayas. *T*he holy scriptures of the Hindu religion like the **Vedas, Brahmangranthas and Upanishads** are the common heritage of the Nepalese and Indians.

The Pashupatinath Temple

Skanda Puran the ancient holy text of the Hindu religion, describes the fame of Nepal as -**"in the Himalayas there is a most auspicious blessed place, where Shanker (the giver of joy) in the form of Pashupatinath resides."**

All ancient Hindu religious text has described Himalayas as the abode and activity of Lord Shiva in which Nepal remained the nucleus. To the west coast of river Bagmati, which arises from a sprout in the Himalayas, is the revered seat of Lord Pashupatinath.

It is said that a holy bath in the Bagmati river at this spot, praying with hymns of 'Rudri Mantra', followed by worshipping Pashupatinath Lingum with Panchamrita - curd, ghee (purified butter) sugar, honey and milk, will render the person free from the cycle of births. So is the magnanimity of Lord Pashupatinath in the minds of Hindus the world over.

The rulers of Nepal, over centuries made contributions in enriching and beautifying this holy temple. According to Gopalraj Vamsavali, the oldest ever chronicle in Nepal, this temple was built by Supus Padeva, a Linchchhavi King who according to the stone inscription erected by Jayadeva 11 in the courtyard of Pashupatinath in 753 AD happened to be the ruler 39 generation before Manadeva (464-505 AD). Yet, there is another chronicle which states that this temple was in the form of Linga shaped Devalaya before Supus Padeva constructed a five storey temple of Pashupatinath in this place. As the time passed, the need for reparing and renovating this temple arose. It is learnt that this temple was reconsturcted by a mediaeval King named Shivadeva (1099-1126 AD). It was renovated by Ananta Malla adding a roof to it.

(source: http://www.shripashupatinath.org/thelegend.asp).

Lord Gautam Buddha, the light of Asia, who was born in Lumbini in Nepal, trekked down to the plains in India in search of Enlightenment.



It is a proven fact that **Valmiki,** the composer of renowned epic the **Ramayana,** saw the light of the world within Nepal at Balmikinagar in Bhisalotoan.

Nepal has never known religious conflict and persecutions, and even today Hinduism and Buddhism live together in complete harmony. Nepalese sculpture and painting is in a style derived from the Pala art of Bihar and Bengal. Many of the laws of Nepal and its social organizations naturally reflect Hindu models, and the Nepalese language is very close to Sanskrit. But the Hindu civilization in Nepal has evolved a distinct character of its own, effected through a blending of its own traditions with those of Tibet.

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For more refer to chapter on **Glimpses XII** to **Glimpses XV.**

Tibet

It cannot be denied that Tibet has borrowed its culture and civilization from India. Tibet, whose art

is close to that of Nepal was, in fact, adopted the **Pala tradition of India,** through Nepal and Kashmir.

Over the centuries, as Buddhism took hold throughout Tibet, the artistic traditions of India influenced Tibetan art. India brought the tradition of painting figures to Tibetan art, while China taught Tibetan artists to visualize nature.



The goddess Saraswati
(source: Ukhtomskij Collection - History of Fine Art in India & Ceylon - By Vincent Smith)

The art of Tibetan Lamaism retains strong elements drawn from Hinduism and Buddhism in India. In architecture, the chorten, or Tibetan stupa was derived from Indian prototypes. Except for Buddhism in the 7th century, Tibet scarcely allowed any other foreign cultural influence within her national frontiers. In fact, Tibet was the last country to embrace Buddhism, which by the 7th century was thriving in many other lands. According to the Tibetan chronicles, the talented king Songtsan-Gampo married the daughter of Amsuvarman, daughter of Nepal's King, and in deference to the new queen's belief which he himself favored, built a great temple known as Jokhang to house her image of Buddha. He also compelled the Emperor of China to give him Princess Wen Ch'eng in marriage. She too was Buddhist and brought to Tibet the famous Buddha image now enshrined in Jokhang. Once the practice of visiting India had begun, many Tibetan students went to India to study Buddhism, and Sanskrit texts began to pour into Tibet. Indian and Chinese scholars visited Tibet and helped to translate and interpret. It was during this period that the celebrated sandalwood image of Avalokitesvara, the compassionate Buddha, now worshipped in the palace of the Dalai Lama, was supposedly brought to Tibet by Indian scholars.

Other Indian influences also found their way to Tibet. For instance the Tibetan medical system owes to origin to the **Ayurvedic** system of India. Tibetan **Tantric forms** are almost indistinguishable from Hindu Tantras, and certain Tantric images like Halahal-avalokitesvara and Nilkant-avalokitesvara are derived from **Lord Shiva**.

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Siberia

Lake Baikal, which is in Siberia, was known to Hindus as lake Vaikhanas; there was a group of rishis known as vaikhanas, who meditated on the shores of the lake. Vaikhanas means deep and powerful thought.



"The pre-Buddhist cult of the Siberian **Buryats** was Shamanism where elements of nature and topographic edifications were freely fused with Shaman songs extolling Indra, Agni and other Indian deities. These



fascinating songs were prevalent only half a century ago. Now they ar e known from Prof. Zmacarano's collections done in the early part of this century."

"By the end of the 17th century, Buddhism was firmly entrenched among the Siberian Buryats."

"In the 1740's Jinba the son of Aghaldai finished his education at the Ton Khor Manjushri monastery, returned to his country and there be built a monastery. Asking for permission to spread the Dharma, he got the command, 'You enter the temple of the Lord and a pothi or holy book and a painted scroll.' He did as he was ordered. When the holy book was examined, it turned out to be sabs-rgyas-mchaghum, and when the painting was examined, it turned out to be Sridevi (Okin tngri)."

"Special sanctity is attached to the Monastery of the Pandita Khampo Lama or the Buddhist Patriarch of Siberia. In 1870, a gigantic statue of Maitreya, measuring 44 cubits was installed at his monastery."

"In 1816 was founded the Aginsky monastery which became the foremost seat of learning in Siberia. It has surved to this day. The major monasteries were 33 in number and they had 50000 xylographic blocks for printing 1696 Buddhist texts and woodcut illustrations."

"The Siberian monastic Universities had four faculties: 1. Philosophy, ii. Tantra, iii. Jyotisha (or Kalachakra), iv. Ayurveda. The texts which were studied there had been translated from or inspired by Sanskrit. To this day, some of these books are preserved in the Siberian branch of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR."



"The monasteries still welcome you with yoghurt mixed with honey and milk, that is Indian **madhuparka**. The ashtamangala emblems embellish the walls of temples. In the library the rare Yisunerdeni-yin Ganjur in 101 tomes is a collection of Nava-ratna manuscripts written in nine inks prepared from silver, mumin, coral, turquoise, gold, copper, peals, iron and conch. It is a pearl of their literature, comprising over a 1000 texts translated from Sanskrit. Every text opens with Engdkeg-un kele-ber 'in the language of India, i.e., in Sanskrit.' The writer has brought 14 texts on **Ganapati.** One of them is Arya-ganapati-stuti, written by the great Siddha Kanhapada. Another small manuscript on the Mahavinayaka-rupa-upadesa which deals with the contemplative form of Vinayaka."

"The Ramayana is also known from Siberian folklore. The Research Institute of the Siberian Branch of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. has the manuscripts of Prof. Golstunsky's work on a short version of the Ramayana in the Kalmuk language."

(source: **India and Siberia - By Lokesh Chandra; in Vishveshwaranand Indological Journal,** vol. X11.1-2 March -September 1974; pg. 192-197).

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Cultural Relations of India and Siberia - By Dr. Lokesh Chandra

"**The Siberian Patriarch reveres the Holy Water of Ganga** Our journey to Siberia was a mission of friendship, a mission to renew our common ancient traditions, and to instill a new significance into them, and above all to carry the Holy Water of the Ganga. For the last few centuries the Siberian Buryats have not seen the Holy Water. They have substituted the water of Ganga by the water of Lake Baikal. They say that the water of Lake Baikal can last up to ten years if kept along with its pebbles and without them for five years. I have myself brought the water of this `Siberian Ganga' as we may call it. The Buryats wanted to be blessed again by the Holy Water of Ganga and that too auspiciously by the sons and daughters of India. One evening we offered the Holy Ganga Water to the Patriarch with due ceremony. It was already fast approaching night, it was the hour of non-substantiality. With the Buryats Dharma is not a ritual but an evocation. It is the finesse of life. The vessel containing Ganga os, or Ganga-jala, must be commensurate with the profundity of the object, which it carries. Before receiving the water the patriarch recited Sanskrit mantras, visibly moved. It was a historic moment in his life. The Patriarch went on reciting Sanskrit mantras while Ganga-jala was being poured form the Indian to the Buryat vessel. When some drops fell into the tray I was wondering as to what would he do with them. He paid due homage to the fallen drops and poured and them into his vessel. Such is the reverence for the water of

Ganga in those remote parts of the inhabited world. There is hardly a country in Asia which does not revere Ganga. If the Holy Water is not available, then the water of indigenous rivers is converted into Ganga Water by special sadhanas. It is a special genre of worship in Asian countries. Likewise the Siberian Buryats convert their water of Baikal into Ganga water by specific offerings and Mantras."

Meghaduta in Siberia

"I met a gentlemen who was interested in the history of Buryat literature. He told me that the first lyric in his language is the `Meghaduta', which was translated from Sanskrit. They have folk poetry, which is earlier, but the `Meghaduta' forms their earliest written kavya. They have also a translation of the Kavyadarsha. They have not only this translation, but also commentaries on it citing instances from their own language, because the translation of the kavyadarsha illustrates only from Sanskrit, whose assonances, alliteration and the like are lost in translation. So how can they sense the flow and subtle nuances of poetry in its translated form? The alternative left is to cite example from their own literature. That is what they have done in their autochthonous commentaries. Now they are trying to understand the kavyadarsha. I have sent them many Sanskrit editions with English translations."

Siberians eager to study Sanskrit

According to official reports there are half a million people who adhere to their age-long faith, which is a mixture of Buddhism, Tantrism and Shaivism and other `ways' (yana) that has traveled there from this country. It is a syncretic faith, wherein India is the Holy Land, Sanskrit the divine language, mantras are recited in Sanskrit, and every child has a certain `samskara'. These half-a-million people look towards India for academic and cultural relations. They are keen to start Sanskrit studies in their colleges. Some even want to study technical texts like the Ashtanga-hridaya of Vagbhata in Ayurveda, which was translated in their language centuries ago.

Ayurveda in Siberia



Ayurveda is a living element of Buryat life. They term it `national medicine'. From Siberia this national medicine (Ayurveda) travelled to European Russia. During the early part of the century, at Leningrad there was a famour Siberian doctor, Badmayef by name. His name is Sanskrit Padma with the Russian suffix-yef. He had also been summoned to treat Stalin. During the purges he was liquidated and Ayurveda went into oblivion. For the last few years researches on Siberian Ayurveda have been going on. I have brought two xylographs from Siberia about their medicinal system. They illustrate every herb, mineral and animal mentioned in Vagbhata's Ashtanga-hridaya. It is the first time in the history of Ayurveda that complete materia medica has been illustrated. Its tradition goes back to the seventh century. The illustration of anatomical details and surgical instruments referred to by **Sushruta** are unique.

To Siberia, India is the embodied Divine

Freezing Siberia is a land where monasteries had the academic traditions of Nalanda, where Sanskrit names are still prevalent, where the Holy Water of Ganga is deeply revered, where mantras ring forth in the immensities of space and silence, where you may witness the madhuparka offered with wooden spoons in the true traditions of the shruti, where purnima and amavasya are holy days with `white food', where Mahakala pervades the primaeval vastnesses, where stotras to Goddess Tara are hummed amidst the clanging and sonorous instruments, where Panini is the model for their linguistic development, where Meghaduta is their first lyric, where Ayurveda is revealed in the fullness of its tradition, where an entire literature inspired by India is preserved, where blessings are given on the triple planes of kaya, vak and citta, where the saffron is the color of sanctity, where mantras are still written in the ornamental Indian script termed Ranjana, where pure gold illumines large scroll paintings, where people wonder at the size of India's lotuses on which their Gods and Goddesses sit or stand, and so on.

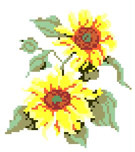
(source: **Cultural Relations of India and Siberia - Dr. Lokesh Chandra** - Dialogue October - December, 2001 , Volume 3 No. 2).

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Historic ties
http://www.indiaserver.com/thehindu/2000/10/11/stories/05111305.htm

Sir, - It augurs well for strengthening the bond between India and Russia when so many political leaders have openly acknowledged the importance of the age-old relationship between India and Russia, during the recent visit of the Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin (The Hindu, Oct. 5).

While Mr. Vajpayee has drawn our attention to the correspondence between Mahatma Gandhi and the Russian novelist, Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), I would like to go back much earlier even to the Puranic age when India had established cultural contacts with that part of the globe which is at present called Russia.



It appears that a few years ago a **Russian orientalist** by name **Prof. Ribakov** from Moscow went to Kanchi to have the darshan and receive the blessings of the late Kanchi Paramacharya. **The Paramacharya asked the Russian professor: ``Does not the northernmost part of Russia have more Sanskrit content in the language?'' The professor was stunned. This scholar, who came to ask questions, shed tears of joy at the very sight of the Paramacharya and was dumbfounded at the depth of his scholarship.** The Paramacharya further explained to the Russian that Russia was called `Rishi Varsha' in ancient Indian geography, because it was the land where our Rishis like sage Yagnavalkya had their conference on the Vedas. This could further be corroborated by the fact that some women in the northernmost point of Russia have names like **Lopamudrova**, which is stunningly close to Lopamudra, wife of sage Agastya.

It may be recalled that during the Sankalpa (a solemn vow to perform an observance) at the time of Pooja, we frequently use the term Jambu Dweepa. This term actually means the entire region covering Asia and Europe, as is evidenced from descriptions in Puranic geography. Even today I understand that in the USSR while writing the postal address, the name of the country is written first and then followed by such specifications as the city, town, area, street number, etc., in that sequence. This is an ancient Hindu tradition which we follow even today during our daily Sankalpa in Pujas.

B. M. N. Murthy, Bangalore

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Latvia - In 1862 itself, Latvian intellectuals, litterateurs and academics had arrived at the conclusion, based on the findings of German linguists, that the ancient Sanskrit language was, in all respects, nearer to Latvian and Lithuanian than to any other foreign language. **Besides this, Latvian researchers identified similarities between pre-Christian Latvian mythology, religious traditions, folklore and Indian mythology and the Hindu pantheon of gods.**

(source: **Prof. Ivbulis: Ardent Indologist & Tagore Scholar** **Tour India** February 2001)

For more refer to chapter on **Glimpses XII** to **Glimpses XV**.

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Conclusion



According to **D. P. Singhal**, " Whatever be the precise nature of the process of Indian cultural alliance and influence, its extent was deep and extensive, and it effects were felt in all aspects of culture from religious thought to the technical skills in agriculture and handicrafts. First, the Indian alphabetic system, which is still used in Burma, Siam, Cambodia, and Laos, was introduced, followed by the introduction of Sanskrit and Sanskrit literature," playing just the same part as Latin in Mediaeval Europe. India also taught her political system centered on the king, and her main religious beliefs. Her sacred texts, and her great epics, were so well learnt throughout this India beyond the seas that they became naturalized in each of these lands. Finally, India unfolded the secrets of her mathematics and astronomy, making possible calendar calculations of much greater accuracy than in the past, and all her

technical skill in husbandry and handicrafts."

(source: **India and World Civilization - By D. P. Singhal**

George Coedes (1886 -1969) author of **Ancient Hinduized states of the Far East**, has pointed out the enduring value of Hindu culture in Outer or Greater India:

"One is struck by the fundamental difference in the results achieved in the countries of the Far East, by the civilizing action of China and that of India. The reason of it lies in the radical difference in the methods of colonization, employed by the Chinese and by the Hindus. The Chinese proceeded with conquest and by annexation: the armies occupied the lands and the officials spread the Chinese civilization. **The Hindu penetration and infiltration seem to have almost always been peaceful and unaccompanied by those destructions, which disgrace the Mongol cavalcade or the Spanish conquest of America.** Far from being destroyed by the conquerors, the indigenous people have found in the Hindu society, transplanted and made supple, a frame, in which their own societies have been able to integrate and develop themselves." "The exchange of ambassadors between the two shores of the Bay of Bengal was done on a **footing of equality**, whereas China always required of the " barbarians of the south" the recognition of her suzerainty, which was expressed by the regular payment of tribute."

"The lands, militarily conquered by China, had to adopt or imitate her institutions, customs, religions, language and script. On the contrary, those, whom **India peacefully conquered, by the prestige of her culture,** have preserved the essence of their individual characters and have developed them, each according to its own genius."

(source: **Les états Hindouisés d'Indochine et d'Indonésie - By George Coedes** p. 64-66).

Thus at a time, when Europe was still uncivilized, Indian culture, was highly civilized and had made its mark from Siberia to Cambodia, Java and Vietnam and beyond. **Swami B. V. Tripurari** has eloquently stated: " The **subtlety of Indian society**, marks its superiority to Europe. It was a subtlety of spiritual outlook that Europeans failed to appreciate. The theory that India, Mother India, is the earthly source of spirituality can be to some extent supported by the fact that India is still today the most religious country in the world, with a theology that dates back to antiquity. The idea that she is the source of civilization as well, although supporting evidence is available, will ultimately require that modern man reevaluate what constitutes civilization before it gains wider acceptance."

(source: **Ancient Wisdom for Modern Ignorance - Swami B. V. Tripurari** p. 37).

For interesting article refer to:

Great Expectations: Hindu Revival Movements in Java, Indonesia
by Thomas Reuter - http://www.swaveda.com/articles.php?action=show&id=49

For more refer to chapter on **Glimpses XII** to **Glimpses XV**.

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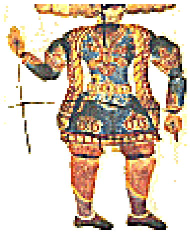
Articles

Ramayana Tales told differently
By Nidhi Chaturvedi
http://www.dailypioneer.com/secon2.asp?cat=\fory14&d=Foray

The most popular epic Ramayana has been retold in various countries adopting the local flavour.

Dussehra and Diwali, the two greatest Hindu festivals revolve around the epic Ramayana and are all about Rama, Sita and Ravana.

The Ramayana has remained the perennial source of inspiration down the centuries not only in India but in the whole of South Asia. Valmiki s



Ramayana is the oldest work of the legend.

According to a legend, when Narada departed for heaven, Valmiki went to the banks of Tamasa river, not far from the Jahnavi (ie Ganga). The Ramayana started its journey from this place.

The different regional versions of the Ramayana like Kambar's Ramayana in Tamil, Krittivasa's Ramayana in Bengali, Tulsidasa's Ramacharitamanasa in Awadhi, Eluttaccan's Adyatma Ramayana in Malayalam etc, are not mere translations. Instead, they also incorporate the local cultures and legends into the adaptions.

The Tibetan story says that Sita was Dasagriva s daughter (ie Ravana) and was abandoned on the advice of astrologers. She was brought up by the cultivators. Vishnu incarnated as Rama to kill Ravana. And as the plan, Rama abdicated his throne and went to the forest to allow Lakshmana to assume kingship.



In Burma, the legend of Rama goes back to the 10th century. Here, Rama has been described as a pious Buddhist king. Another Buddhist addition is that Rama and Sugriva met under the shade of Bodhi tree.

In Malaysia, most of the manuscripts discovered were written after the advent of Islam. And are thus, subsequently altered in the light of Islamic tenets and believes. In course of this transformation, many new episodes were included. An interesting example is that Allah sent Adam to Ravana, and Adam made the latter the lord of earth, water, nether world and the kingdom of Indra.

King Dasaratha was a great grand son of Adam. He had two wives, Mandudari and Baliadari. Ravana asked Dasaratha to hand over Mandudari, who in turn assumed an illusory form named Mandudasi to become Ravana s wife.

According to the **Malaya** Rama stories, all chief characters such as Rama, Sita, Ravana, Valin and Hanuman are related to each other. Sita is Ravana s daughter. Laxman and Hanuman have been have illustrated as great characters.

According to the **Thai** notion, Valmiki s Ramayana finds its roots in Thailand. In fact, the Thai identify themselves so much so that they are not interested to know whether Ramayana was originally written in India.



They believe that Ramayana is their own creation and the **Thai Ramakien** is the original Rama story. Many places in Thailand have been identified with Ramayana episodes. For example, the city of Ayutthaya ie, Ayodhya has been mentioned as the capital of the kingdom. It is believed that Rama, on his return to Ayodhya after defeating Ravana, wanted to reward Hanuman for his services. He shot an arrow and where the arrow fell would be identified as Hanuman s capital.

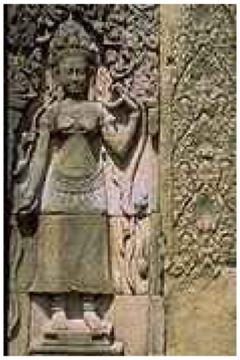
The arrow fell at the town of Lopburi. The impact of the arrow made the soil white, that is why the soil of the place is white. There is a hill named chayanat, with a flattened top. It is believed that when Hanuman went out in search of certain medicinal plants to save the life of Laxman , he lay on the top of the hill and swept the nearby forests with his long tail for searching out the desired plants and herbs. It was then that the top of the hill was flattened by the body weight of Hanuman. Also included in the epic is a hill named Sarburi with an indent. Folklore has it that when Ravana, after abducting Sita, was driving his chariot very fast, the axle of the chariot dashed against the hill, creating the crater.

The residents of Chonburi attribute the red soil of the place to a bloody fight between Valin, the monkey king and Thorapi or Dundubhi, a mighty buffalo.

Another striking feature of Ramkien is the character of Hanuman. In India, we know Hanuman as a celibate (a bramhacharee). But in Ramakien, Hanuman s marriage has been described in great detail. He had affairs with many women celestial, demonic and human. He even had children.

There are many interesting deviations in the Lao versions of the Ramayana. Ravana is a nephew of king Dasrath. Rama, while roaming in the forest in search of Sita, ate the fruit of a particular tree in the forest and was transformed into a monkey.

He met a Nengsi, who originally a woman who had been turned into a female monkey. Rama married Nengsi and Hanuman was born out of this marriage. Rama, having killed Valin, married the latter's widow.



According to **Cambodian** Ramaker, Ram was Vishnu s incarnated and Akaingameso, doorkeeper of the God, was born as Rava, i.e, Ravana.

Sita, in her earlier birth, was the wife of Indra, when she was insulted by Ravana. With a view to avenge the wrong, she was born as Ravana s daughter. Ravana, as advised by his astrologer brother Bibhek (ie Vibhishana), shut her in a chest, carried the chest to a distant land and burried it there.

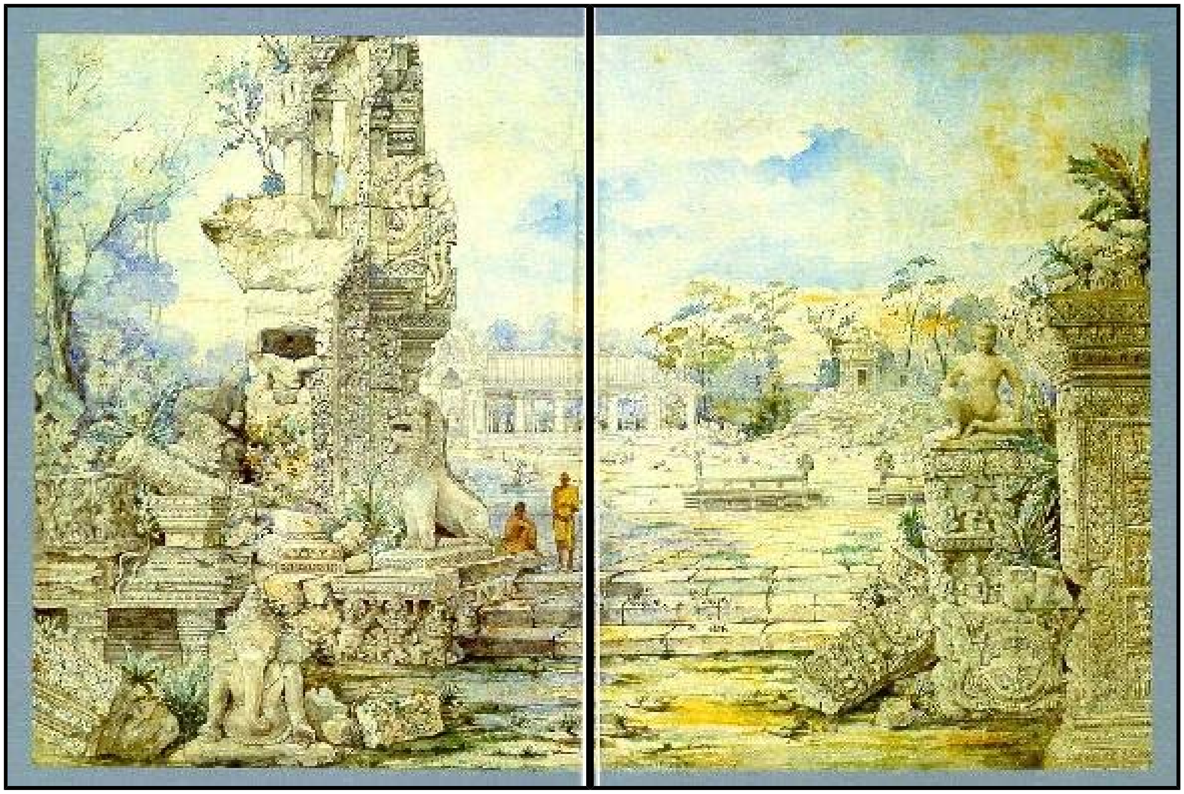
She was later unearthed and discovered by king Janaka. Sugreeva and Valin are two sons of the wife of a sage, by Aditya and Indra respectively. When the wife s infidelity was disclosed, the sage cursed the two sons, as a result of which, they turned into monkeys. Hanuman was born of Svaha (sister of Sugreeva and Valin) and Naray, ie, Narayana.

The Ramaker, however, closely follows Valmiki s Ramayana episodes of Ram s friendship with the monkey chiefs, Hanuman s embassy to Lanka, construction of the bridge, invasion of Lanka by Ram and Laxman, Vibhishana s joining the camp of Rama, fighting with Indrajit and Kumbhkarna, slaying of Ravana, Sita s ordeal by fire and Rama s coronation as king.

There is only one difference that Sita gave birth to a son who was named Ramalaksa by Valmiki. One day, Sita went to the river for a bath with her son when the sage was engrossed in meditation.

When he did not see the child after his meditation, he created another child by his yogic power and he was named as Jupalaksa. The rest is as it is in the Ramayana.

But, the moral of the story is the same in all the versions victory of good over evil no matter what the deviations.



French architect Lucien Fournereau's paintings of the splendor of Angkor Wat displayed at the Paris Salon in 1890.

(source: **Angkor: Heart of an Asian Empire - By Bruno Dagens** p. 1).

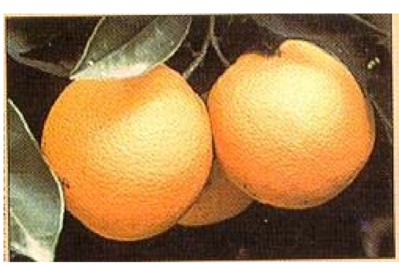
For more refer to chapter on **Glimpses XII** to **Glimpses XV.**

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Did You Know

The Color Orange

Orange suffered an identity crisis, having no name in European languages until orange, the fruit, arrived from Asia.



The ancestor of the modern orange grew wild in North India and eventually came by boat to Europe. India has two Sanskrit names for this fruit, naranga and santara. Naranga became naranj in Arabic, then the English altered it to orange, Santara got modified to the Portuguese, cintra hence citrus and related words.

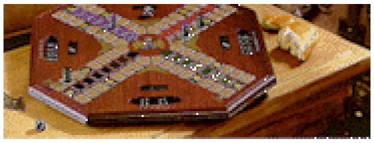
(source: **Hinduism Today - December issue 1999** p. 9))

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The Game Connection

Way before Columbus sailed the ocean blue in 1492, two almost identical games were played in India and South America. Hindu pachisi (or parchisi) dates back at least 2,200 years, and Aztec patolli over 1,600 years. Western Historians generally refuse to believe there was any contact between Asia/Europe and the Americas prior to Columbus,





and dismiss any evidence to the contrary as "coincidence" or "independent reinvention."

Parchsi/patolli are among a great deal of evidence to the contrary.



Patolli: *The ancient Aztec gambling game*

One study calculated the odds against independent invention of such a complicated game to be 1 in 10 to the twenty-seventh power- virtually impossible. The rules are basically the same for these popular gambling games. For example, four people move their four pieces by casting cowry shells in pachisi, and beans in patolli. When one piece lands on another person's piece, the other piece goes back to the start.

(source: **Hinduism Today Nov/December 2000** p. 15)

Edward B. Tylor, writing in 1881, pointed out that the ancient Mexican game, patolli, a favorite of the Aztecs, was very similar to pachisi, played in India. (Anthropology London: 1881).

(for more information please refer to chapter on **India on Pacific Waves?**).

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Updated - September 7, 2005